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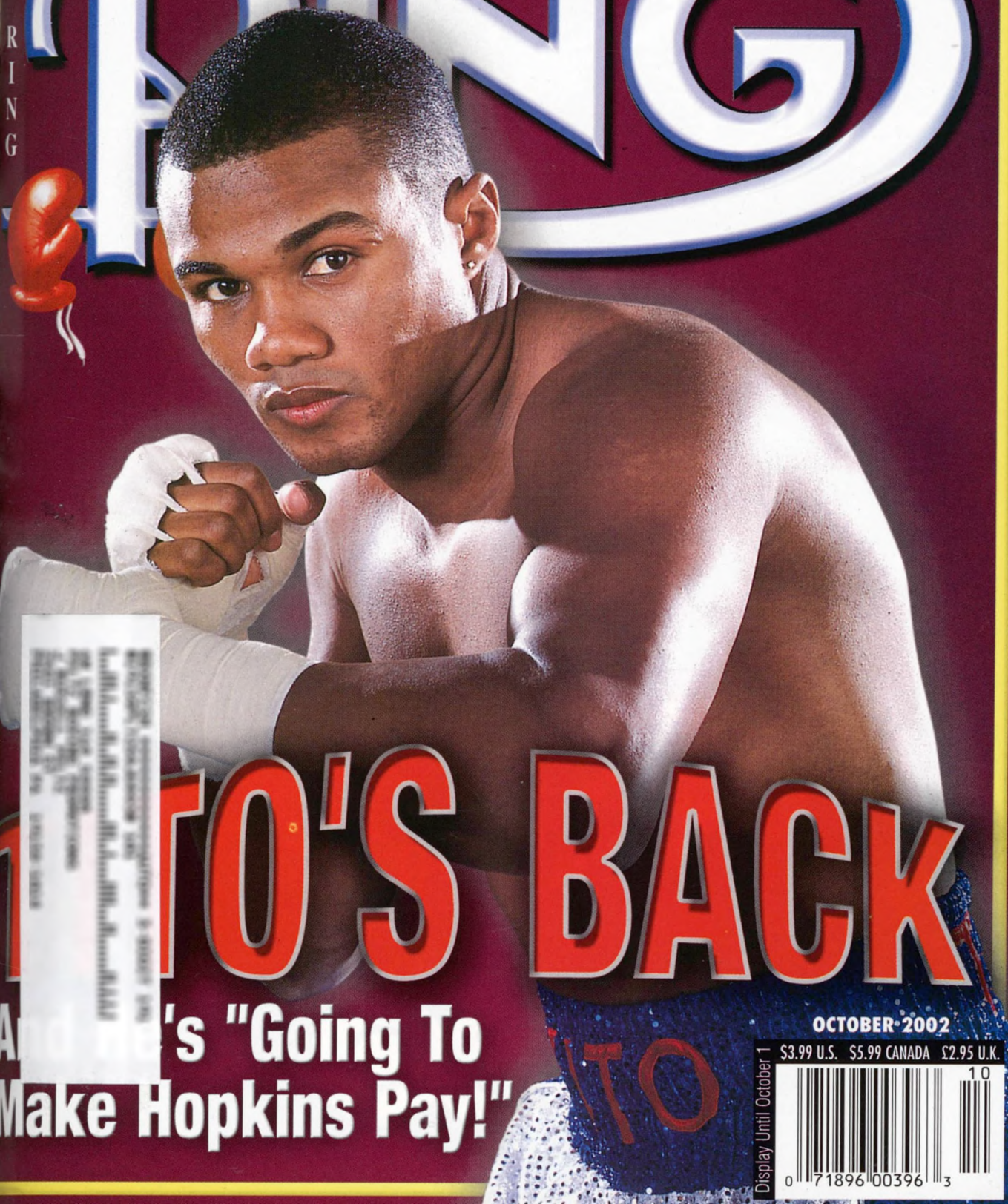

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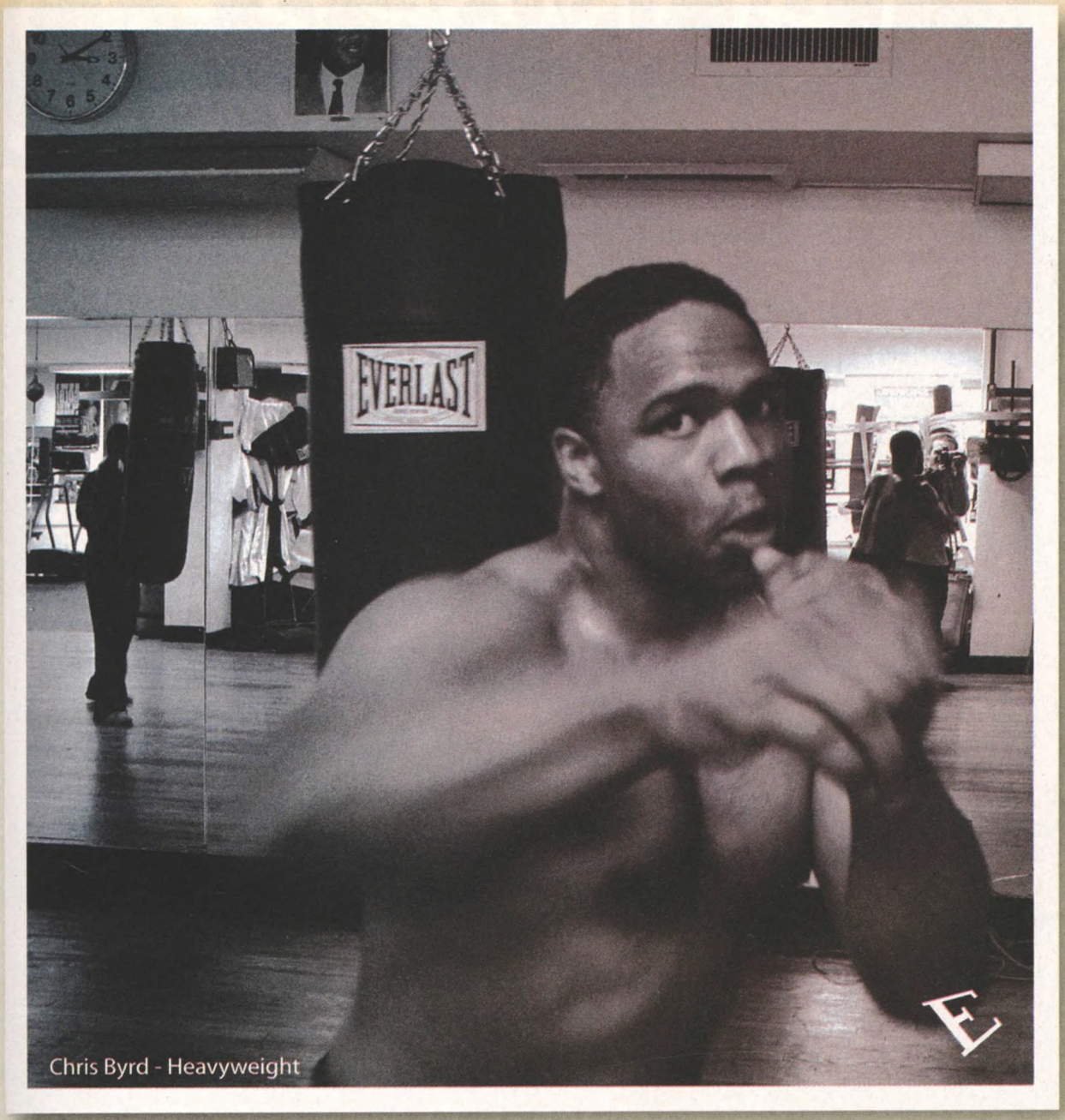

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RINGSIDE

Boxing can break your heart in so many different ways; sometimes it's tough to recall what got you hooked in the first place. Then, usually when you're on the verge of throwing up your hands in disgust and turning your back, something wonderful happens. And you fall in love all over again.

So it was with the magnificent Micky Ward-Arturo Gatti brawl, an invigorating tonic that renewed our faith in the sport and reminded us why we suffer through all those bad bouts, week after week, month after month, waiting for moments such as these.

The effect a great fight has on its participants is a subject often discussed on the pages of THE RING, but what a fight such as Ward-Gatti does to the viewers is, in its own way, equally fascinating. And it's not just the fans that experience a rush; the media can also get caught up in the same wave of euphoria. Ward-Gatti was a fight so visceral that it turned hard-boiled boxing writers into little boys again, peeling back the layers of cynicism and revealing the fans beneath their jaded exteriors.

What spectators and media members alike witnessed was a spectacle so brutal, yet so filled with courage and nobility, that it became an object of veneration.

There were times in the fight, especially during the near-apocalyptic ninth, when it was difficult to believe that Gatti and Ward were actually human. Such was the scope of their savagery. But the truth, of course, is just the opposite. It is the fighters' humanity and willingness to sacrifice themselves that transforms something intrinsically ugly into a thing of beauty.

Following the postfight press conference, I was among a group of journalists who lingered in the arena as the work crew broke down the ring and packed it away. Nobody wanted to leave. We wanted to stay connected to the majestic struggle that had just taken place, and bask in the afterglow a while longer. It was as if we were afraid that if we removed ourselves physically from the battleground, the magic would disappear.

But the enchantment created by Ward and Gatti didn't vanish with the dawning of a new day, or the next. And come Monday morning, instead of suffering from an all too familiar hangover, the boxing world was still buzzing with the sort of giddy excitement that only a great prize fight can generate.

But at the same time, we realize that a single travesty can instantly wipe out the positive vibration created by this pair of incredibly brave men. That's one of the reasons fights such as Ward-Gatti are so special. They not only justify our passion for the sport, they place the Sweet Science in a temporary state of grace. One from which it will surely fall, but one that is, nevertheless, gratifying to obtain, even for the briefest of periods.

As many witnesses said in the aftermath of the Ward-Gatti epic, there were no losers that night. Sure, Ward got the nod, but for once everybody went home a winner. And the biggest winner of all was boxing.

Thank you, Micky. Thank you, Arturo.

We needed that.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 81, No. 11 **October 2002**

The Ring

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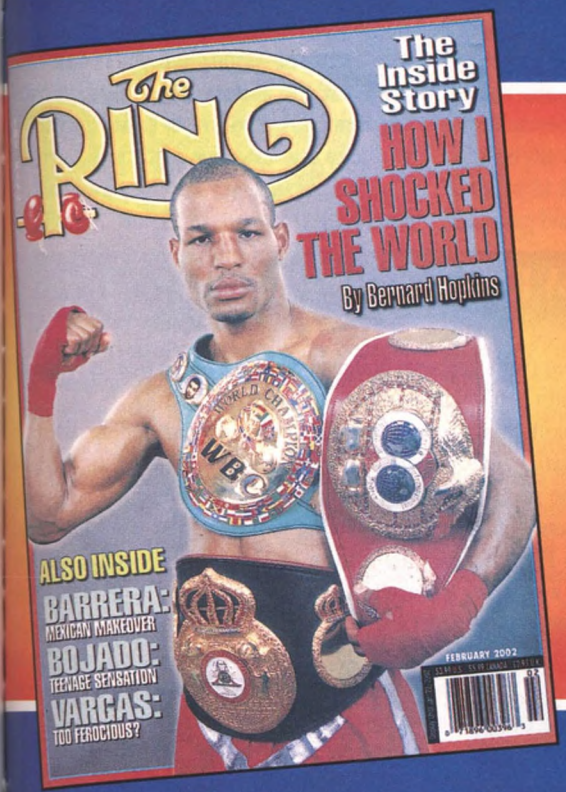

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ROUND ONE

STANLEY WESTON, 1919-2002

Stanley Weston, who rescued THE RING from financial collapse when he purchased the company in 1989, died on April 11 after a nine-month battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 82.

Weston published more than 2,500 boxing magazines over a 40-year period, including such titles as *Boxing Illustrated*, *World Boxing*, *Boxing International*, *KO*, and, finally, THE RING. Weston's involvement in publishing began when he met THE RING Editor-in-Chief Nat Fleischer as a young boy growing up in Long Beach, Long Island. Fleischer took a liking to the 14-year-old who showed a love for both boxing and the magazine Fleischer had founded in 1922. Fleischer would later hire Weston for what was then thought to be a summer job after Weston's graduation from high school in 1937.

Weston: Buying THE RING from Dave DeBusschere (right) was his career's crowning achievement

Over the next 14 years, Weston would paint 57 front covers for THE RING. His employment at the magazine was interrupted in 1941, however, when Weston was drafted. Five years later, he was discharged from the Air Force as a major, but was called back during the Korean war in 1951.

Upon returning home in 1953, Weston formed his own company with the launch of *Boxing & Wrestling*, drawing the ire of Fleischer in the process.

Working out of the basement in his home in Rockville Centre, Long Island, Weston did it all: He wrote, he photographed, he edited, and he designed. He launched more boxing and wrestling magazines and was eventually able to move his operation out of his home and ultimately had a five-story office building constructed a few blocks from his residence, in Rockville Centre, Long Island.

Later in his career, with his company and staff firmly established, Weston, then 70 years old, seemed willing to let his publishing business grow around him, devoting much of his time to his to lifelong hobby, painting, and the management of his office building. The purchase of THE RING, however, revived his interest in the business' day-to-day operations

By 1992, THE RING was reaffirmed as "The Bible Of Boxing." But Weston, seeking long-term protection for the business he had grown from his basement and for the employees he had nurtured and generously provided for, decided it was time to sell his publishing entities.

When Nicholas Karabots purchased the titles and their assets, Stanley Weston was given the honorary position of publisher. His name will hold its position in the masthead, beneath that of his mentor Fleischer, for this issue.

—Stu Saks

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF

The title of Gavin Evans' new book, *Dancing Shoes Is Dead: A Tale Of Fighting Men In South Africa* (Doubleday, 470 pages, paperback), refers to the ring death of Jacob "Dancing Shoes" Morake, who died as a result of the injuries suffered in his 1985 bout with fellow South African Brian Mitchell. But *Dancing Shoes* is not really a boxing book per se. It's much, much more.

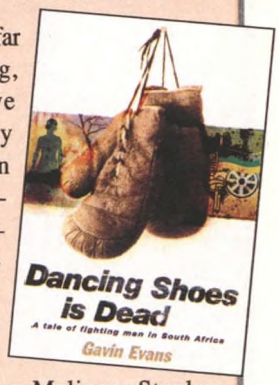
Evans, the British-born son of an Anglican minister stationed in South Africa, came of age in a nation still ruled by a racist apartheid government. As he struggled to find his way in the world, Evans became embroiled in both boxing—a boyhood passion prompted by his father's love of the game—and politics.

Although his on-and-off amateur career never went very far, through his boxing connections, Evans became well-acquainted with the black community, and joined its fight for freedom while still in school. He became a member of the then-outlawed African National Congress' underground, and for more than a decade worked clandestinely toward the overthrow of apartheid. Evans frequently placed himself in danger; he was followed, detained and questioned, and eventually placed on a military death squad's hit list.

Throughout his years with the ANC, Evans continued his love affair with the Sweet Science, as both an occasional participant and a regular reporter for various publications. In this latter capacity, he exposed the deeply rooted racial inequities endemic in South African boxing, further alienating himself from the white establishment.

Evans artfully blends the story of his dual passions, insightfully juxtaposing the struggles involved in both boxing and political activism. But even though boxing has its share of thugs and backstabbers, they pale in comparison to the government boogiemen that terrorize Evans and murder many of his less-fortunate comrades. In fact, for all its faults, boxing sometimes seems like an oasis for Evans, where he can temporarily escape the madness of the outside world.

In lesser hands, *Dancing Shoes* could have come off as an exercise in self-aggrandizement. But Evans' tone is so self-effacing and his writing so strong, the book is a joy from cover to cover. Although he deals with themes far larger than boxing, Evans' perceptive take on virtually every well-known South African boxing personality—Gerrie Coetzee, Cedric Kushner, Baby Jake Matlala, Brian Mitchell, Arthur Mayisela, Sugarboy Malinga, Stanley Christodoulou, Dingaan Thobela, etc., etc.—will impress even those who think they know the game inside-out.



Taken as a whole, *Dancing Shoes* is a superb memoir of a turbulent time—and the coming-out party for an author whose writing talent far exceeds his prowess between the ropes. It comes with the highest recommendation.

(Although a second paperback edition is due out in the U.S. later this year, *Dancing Shoes* is currently available on Amazon.com or by writing directly to the publisher at: Doubleday, Transworld, 61-63 Uxbridge Rd., London W5 5SA, UK)

—Nigel Collins

DAVIS DEALT A BLOW

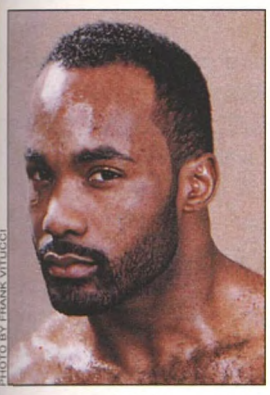


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Davis: Arrested for running a coke ring

For many young men, boxing offers a way out of trouble and off of the streets. For lightweight fringe contender Calvin Davis, if the charges made by the FBI are true, boxing doesn't seem to have done its job. In fact, boxing played a major role in landing him in jail, because after two months as a fugitive, it was Davis' appearance on a fight card in New Mexico that helped the authorities track him down.

Davis was supposed to face Jesse Gutierrez on April 30 at the Santa Ana Star Casino in Bernalillo, New Mexico, but the day before the fight, he was arrested and charged, along with three others, with heading a multimillion-dollar cocaine trafficking ring in Philadelphia that police said supplied 150 kilos of the drug between February and July 1999.

"We were shocked," former referee Richard Steele, a co-promoter of the April 30 show, told the *Philadelphia Daily News* after hearing of Davis' arrest. "This is the kind of kid you'd never expect anything like this to happen to ... Calvin has never given a hint of doing anything wrong in the ring or out of the ring."

Davis, 32, was jailed in Sandoval County Detention Facility, though co-promoter Andrew Lewis maintained the fighter's innocence.

"Calvin will be free real soon because they can't find him guilty of something he didn't do," Lewis said shortly after the arrest.

Among Davis' alleged co-conspirators was his older brother, Keith, who was known on the streets as "Big Cheesesteak," while Calvin was known as "Little Cheesesteak." In the ring, Davis is known as "Strictly Business." And, if the charges prove true, it certainly seems he would have been better off sticking strictly to the boxing business—or quitting the boxing business once he knew the FBI was after him.

—Eric Raskin

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
4-26-02	Omar Weis W 10 Arturo Urena	ESPN2	jw	B-	C	B-
Weis may not be the most intimidating guy around, but he sure can box						
4-26-02	Juan Valenzuela KO 1 Julio Diaz	ESPN2	l	B	C+	B
Upset! It has not been a good year for the brothers Diaz						
4-27-02	Rocky Juarez KO 5 Javier Ortiz	Show	f	C	C+	C+
Juarez isn't as flashy as some of his compatriots, but he gets the job done						
4-27-02	Malik Scott KO 1 Britton Thomas	Show	h	C	C	C+
Three straight rights to the chin will do it every time						
4-27-02	Cliff Etienne W 10 Terrance Lewis	Show	h	B-	B+	C+
Not Etienne's most impressive outing, but at least he didn't get decked seven times						
4-27-02	**Johnny Tapia W 12 Manuel Medina**	**HBO**	**IBF f**	**A**	**B+**	**B+**
The one time Medina doesn't headbutt his way to victory and he gets ripped off						
4-27-02	Jameel McCline W 10 Shannon Briggs	HBO	h	B+	B-	C
If George Foreman and Ron Lyle were dead, they'd be spinning in their graves						
5-3-02	Gabriel Elizondo KO 7 Manny Melchor	ESPN2	fl	C+	B-	C+
Melchor used to be a heck of a fighter; he isn't anymore						
5-3-02	Tony Ayala KO 2 Urbano Gurrola	ESPN2	sm	C	D+	C
If you stand right in front of Ayala—and your name isn't Yory Boy Campas—he's going to get you						
5-10-02	Mike Stewart W 10 John Bailey	ESPN2	l	C	C	C+
Never bet on the guy with the mullet						
5-10-02	Kassim Ouma KO 8 Jason Papillion	ESPN2	jm	B	B-	C
Ouma powers his way to another win; outside the top five in the division, he's going to be very hard to beat						
5-10-02	Kermit Cintron KO 2 Patrick Thorns	Telef	w	C+	B-	C
Cintron may be redefining how we think of the name "Kermit"						
5-10-02	Juan Lopez D 10 Ubaldo Hernandez	Telef	jw	C+	A-	B+
Hernandez early, Lopez middle, Hernandez late; they could have flipped a coin and we wouldn't argue						
5-11-02	Ruslan Chagaev W 8 Christopher Isaac	Show	h	C	C+	C+
Chagaev scores knockdown early, settles for rout over the distance						
5-11-02	Mohamed Abdulaev KO 3 Juan Rivera	Show	w	C+	B+	B
What's going on in Uzbekistan that these guys fight so well?						
5-11-02	**Diobelys Hurtado KO 7 Randall Bailey**	**HBO**	**WBA jw**	**B+**	**B+**	**B**
Apparently, if you can get to Bailey's body without getting decapitated, you have a heck of a shot						
5-11-02	Felix Trinidad KO 4 Hassine Cherifi	HBO	m	A	C-	C+
In four rounds, Trinidad did more damage than Keith Holmes, William Joppy, and Harry Simon combined						
5-16-02	Ron Weaver W 10 Eduardo Gutierrez	ESPN2	sm	C-	B+	B-
Weaver finally ends up on the winning end of one of these last-second fights						
5-16-02	Alex Bunema D 10 Carlos Bojorquez	ESPN2	jm	B-	B+	B+
Even with the two knockdowns, we scored it for Bunema; good, hard fight either way						
5-17-02	Jorge Paez KO 5 Mike Juarez	Telef	l	C	C	B-
If Paez keeps this up, Troy Dorsey just might mount a comeback						
5-17-02	Oscar Larios KO 12 Israel Vazquez	ESPN2	jf	B+	A	A
Wonderful fight; what's the over-under on how long it takes Willie Jorrin to announce he's moving up to feather?						
5-18-02	Kuvanych Toygonbayev W 10 Oba Carr	Show	jm	C	C+	C-
Depending on how you felt about Carr when he was good, this was either fun to watch or disturbing						
5-18-02	**Kostya Tszyu W 12 Ben Tackie**	**Show**	**World jw**	**A+**	**A**	**B+**
One word for this: brilliant						
5-18-02	Micky Ward W 10 Arturo Gatti	HBO	w	B+	A+	A+
You may not see a better fight the rest of your life						
5-19-02	Tim Witherspoon W 10 Ahmad Abdin	FOXSN	h	C	C	D
The antithesis of Ward-Gatti						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telem—Telemundo, Telef—Telefutura

TEMPORARY TATTOOS ... AND PERMANENT CHANGES?

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Brown, Witherspoon, Ouma, Antuofermo, and Adams take a stand

Can you imagine Oscar De La Hoya, Roy Jones, Mike Tyson, and Lennox Lewis outside of a fight venue holding up picket signs, protesting the many ills that face boxers today? That's what a group of boxers calling themselves the "freedom fighters" hope could happen in the future.

Using an ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* show that featured junior middleweight contender Kassim Ouma as a backdrop, the cries for a boxers' union sounded. Ouma went on to score an eighth-round technical knockout of Jason Papillion in the main event of the May 10 card in Dover, Delaware, but the real fight began after the bout.

Ouma's promoter, J Russell Peltz, who also is the matchmaker for *FNF*, was left in a precarious position. Peltz was levied a $10,000 fine because Ouma wore a temporary GoldenPalace.com tattoo on his back, which is prohibited by ESPN. Peltz knew nothing about the tattoo, which was stenciled onto Ouma after the weigh-in.

"I've been told by ESPN and I have told other promoters in recent months that if any fighter comes into the ring wearing advertising on their back, they will be fined $10,000," Peltz said. "It's a policy. I asked [Ouma's] manager [Jim Rowan] twice during the day of the fight if there was going to be anything on Kassim's back. I was very upset when I saw it. It ruined my whole night."

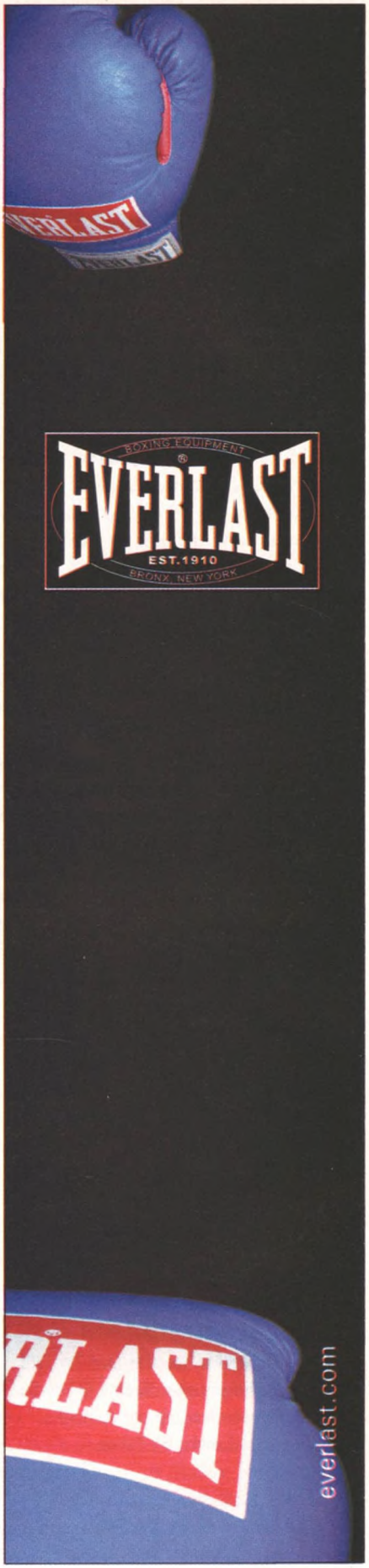
The main event outside the ring centered on boxers' rights. It featured a shirt-waving, belly-flapping Tim Witherspoon, who also wore temporary tattoos and ranted about a boxers' union during Ouma's fight. The protest also featured former middleweight champ Vito Antuofermo, former 122-pound titlist Clarence "Bones" Adams, and Canadian cruiserweight contender Dale Brown. They all wore temporary tattoos asking for free speech for fighters, and the right to wear what they want on their backs. Backing them was Paul Johnson, a former boxer and chairman of the newly formed Boxing Organizing Committee.

"We felt we wanted to make Kassim's fight kind of like a Boston Tea Party for boxing," said Rowan. "We felt the tattoo thing was an issue to galvanize all of the fighters. I understand the point of ESPN, but it's a chance for the fighter to make more money."

Ouma was at the middle of the maelstrom of raised voices and shirt-waving fat men.

"I really don't know what the big deal is, I just hope no one tries to stop me in my career," said Ouma, who almost doubled his $15,000 fight purse by wearing the advertising tattoo. "I guess it's an issue. I don't really know much about it."

—Joe Santoliquito



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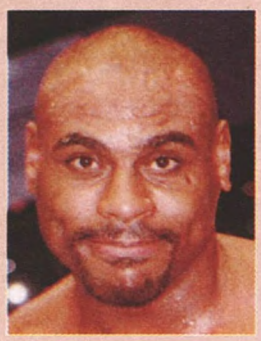
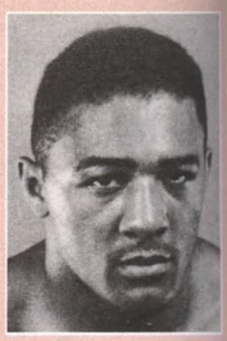


McCall: Heavyweight contender slips up

Former heavyweight titleholder **Oliver McCall** was just beginning to rebuild some career momentum with his upset kayo of **Henry Akinwande** last November, but that momentum was erased when he was sentenced to one year in jail by a Martinsville, Virginia, judge in early-May for probation violation. McCall had been released from jail in 1999 under the provision that he stay in a drug rehab program, but a lack of attendance at those rehab sessions has landed him back behind bars at the age of 37 … Also heading to prison is future Hall of Famer **Pernell Whitaker**, who received a 30-day sentence in early-May for driving violations. Interestingly, Whitaker will not have to serve the 30 days consecutively; instead, he has been allowed to serve the time on weekends … Promoter **Bob Arum** was cleared in early-May to resume promoting shows in New Jersey, following a unanimous vote by the state commission. Arum, who admitted in the 2000 IBF trial to paying bribes in exchange for sanctioning, voluntarily stopped promoting in New Jersey after the state indicated they might revoke his license. But a year-and-a-half later, Arum is apparently back in the commission's good graces … The news isn't as good for Arum's arch-rival, **Don King**, who was accused in early-May by an X-ray technician at the Cleveland [Ohio] Clinic of groping and propositioning her while there as a patient in January. King's lawyer called **Deborah Klimo's** charges a fabrication, and a lawyer for the Cleveland Clinic even stated he believed King's "outgoing personality" was misinterpreted by Klimo. Nonetheless, Klimo filed a lawsuit against King, seeking an unspecified amount for mental anguish, trauma, and humiliation … Another major promoter who could be in hot water is **Cedric Kushner**, who was sued by former partner **Rodney Berman** of South Africa for fraud and embezzlement to the tune of approximately $10-million. Berman alleges that Kushner never paid him his share for a number of fights they worked on together, including the **Hasim Rahman-Lennox Lewis** fight in Johannesburg in '01 … Promoter **J Russell Peltz** is also involved in a lawsuit. Peltz sued **Bill Cayton** in mid-April for not paying him his share of an $80-million purse for the sale of roughly 200 boxing films belonging to Peltz … One last promoter in the news: Former Lewis promoter **Panos Eliades** had his license pulled in late-April by the British Boxing Board of Control over funds still owed to **Frans Botha** from "The White Buffalo's" '00 title fight against Lewis in London … Former lightweight titleholder Cesar **Bazan** was mugged, beaten, and cut by four unknown assailants in Mexico City in late-April, and is expected to be unable to fight until at least December … Very sad news to report from the Philippines, where junior featherweight **Manuel Zayas** died in late-April due to brain injuries suffered in a ninth-round knockout loss to **Alex Escaner** three days earlier. Zayas was 21 years old … Former IBF ratings chairman and Virginia boxing commissioner **Doug Beavers**, best known as the man seen on tape giving money to **Bob Lee** and calling Don King "Fuzzy Wuzzy" as part of the infamous IBF bribery scandal, died in late-April in Portsmouth, Virginia. Beavers was 58 … 1950s Pittsburgh heavyweight contender **Bob Baker** died in late-April at the age of 75. Baker, who compiled a 51-16-1 (20) record over 11 years as one of the top contenders to the title, fought the likes of **Jimmy Bivins** (W 10), **Archie Moore** (KO by 9), **Eddie Machen** (L 10), and **George Chuvalo** (W 10).



Baker: Former heavyweight contender dies

THE PUNCHLINES

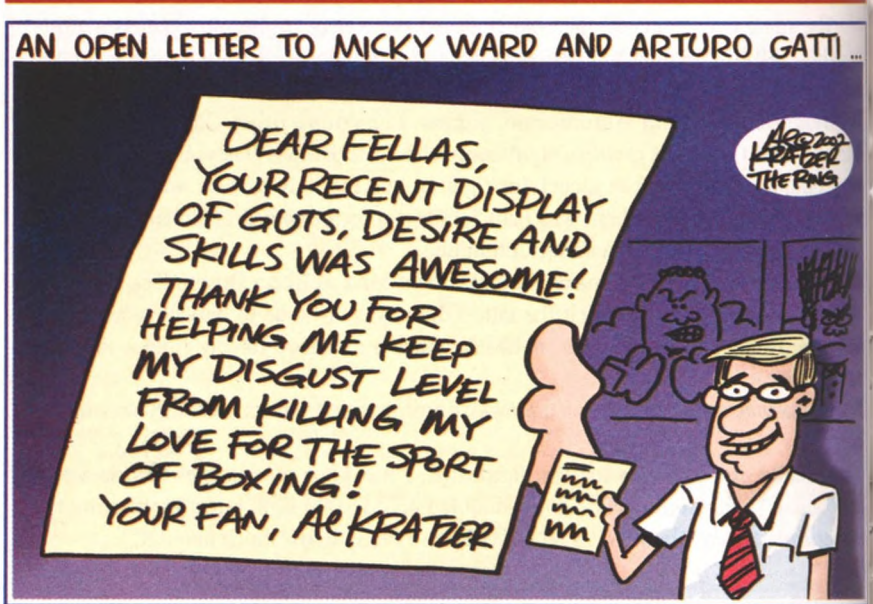
"I normally don't do interviews with women unless I fornicate with them. So you shouldn't talk anymore unless you want to, you know."

—Mike Tyson, to a female reporter during a media session at his training camp in Maui

"When he was incarcerated he said he was reading books. Seems to me he must have been reading comic books."

—Lennox Lewis, on Tyson

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Middleweight
2. **ROY JONES** Light Heavyweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Featherweight
4. **VERNON FORREST** Welterweight
5. **FELIX TRINIDAD** Middleweight
6. **SHANE MOSLEY** Welterweight
7. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** Lightweight
8. **KOSTYA TSZYU** Junior Welterweight
9. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Junior Middleweight
10. **RICARDO LOPEZ** Junior Flyweight

(For period ended May 19, 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Marcelo Dominguez (ninth last issue) is now campaigning as a heavyweight and is gone from the 190-pound rankings. Dominguez' departure allows Jorge Castro to move from 10th to ninth, and Dale Brown to enter the rankings at number 10.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Keith Holmes (sixth last issue), who hasn't fought in more than a year, is dropped for inactivity. Hassine Cherifi (seventh last issue) falls to ninth due to his knockout loss to Felix Trinidad. The reshuffling advances Antonio Perugino (eighth last issue), Tito Mendoza (ninth last issue), and Robert Allen (10th last issue) two positions each. Rhoshii Wells debuts at number 10.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Due to the highly controversial nature of the decision in their recent bout, Michele Piccirillo (eighth last issue) and Cory Spinks (formerly ninth) switch places.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Several major matches prompt significant changes: Formerly unranked Diobelys Hurtado jumps into the fifth spot on the strength of his knockout of Randall Bailey (fifth last issue), who exits. Ben Tackie slides from fourth to ninth following his wide decision loss to world champion Kostya Tszyu. Micky Ward zooms from seventh to fourth due to his stirring but debatable decision over Arturo Gatti, who also advances (from ninth to sixth) based on his performance against Ward. The shakeup pushes Jesse James Leija down from sixth to seventh.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Julio Diaz (seventh last issue) is gone following his shocking knockout loss to journeyman Juan Valenzuela. Diaz' departure raises Juan Lazcano (eighth last issue), Artur Grigorian (ninth last issue), and Alejandro Gonzalez (10th last issue) one spot each, while Colin Dunne is back onboard at number 10.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: The gift decision Johnny Tapia received in his match with Manuel Medina was so bad, Tapia falls from fourth to fifth, while Medina improves from seventh to fourth. Juan Manuel Marquez (fifth last issue) and Derrick Gainer (formerly sixth) drop one spot each to accommodate Medina's advancement.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Oscar Larios' (fifth last issue) kayo of 10th-ranked Israel Vazquez bumps Larios up to number three. Larios' advancement shoves down Willie Jorrin (third last issue) and Lehlo Ledwaba (fourth last issue) one spot each. Osamu Sato (eighth last issue) moves up to seventh after stopping Yoddamrong Sithyodthong, who slips from seventh to eighth.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: Alejandro Montiel (fifth last issue) exits after being stopped in a junior bantamweight bout. This pushes everybody else up one position and makes room for Adonis Rivas at number 10.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Kostya Tszyu (10th last issue) advances to the eighth position thanks to his one-sided decision over Ben Tackie and the continued inactivity of Oscar De La Hoya (eighth last issue) and Ricardo Lopez (ninth last issue). De La Hoya and Lopez fall to ninth and 10th, respectively. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended May 19, 2002

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Kostya Tszyu remained the junior welterweight champ by turning back the challenge of Ben Tackie

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors
Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: LENNOX LEWIS
England 39-2-1 (30)

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 38-1 (35)
2. **MIKE TYSON**
Catskill, NY 49-3 (43)
3. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 34-2 (19)
4. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 35-3 (29)
5. **KIRK JOHNSON**
Canada 32-0-1 (23)
6. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
Fairburn, GA 37-5-2 (25)
7. **JOHN RUIZ**
Chelsea, MA 37-4-1 (27)
8. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Port Jefferson, NY 28-2-3 (16)
9. **DAVID TUA**
New Zealand 40-3 (35)
10. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 31-1 (30)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
Whittier, CA 34-2 (27)
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 22-1 (20)
3. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 43-3 (25)
4. **FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO**
Spain 53-5 (36)
5. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 45-3 (29)
6. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 25-2-1 (20)
7. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 16-1-1 (11)
8. **ALEX BUNEMA**
Dallas, TX 20-3-2 (12)
9. **STEVE ROBERTS**
England 29-0 (14)
10. **ROMAN KARMAZIN**
Russia 29-0-1 (18)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 54-3 (39)
2. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 41-0 (31)
3. **NASEEM HAMED**
England 36-1 (31)
4. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 60-12 (27)
5. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
Albuquerque, NM 52-2-2 (28)
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 38-2 (30)
7. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 38-5 (24)
8. **FRANKIE TOLEDO**
Paterson, NJ 41-6-1 (16)
9. **JULIO PABLO CHACON**
Argentina 43-2 (31)
10. **DANIEL SEDA**
Puerto Rico 18-0 (15)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: PAULIE AYALA
Ft. Worth, TX 34-1 (12)

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 33-2-1 (24)
2. **BONES ADAMS**
Henderson, KY 41-5-3 (19)
3. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 44-3-1 (31)
4. **WILLIE JORRIN**
Sacramento, CA 28-0-1 (12)
5. **LEHLO LEDWABA**
South Africa 33-2-1 (22)
6. **MICHAEL BRODIE**
England 33-1 (23)
7. **OSAMU SATO**
Japan 26-1-2 (15)
8. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 27-1-1 (12)
9. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ**
Mexico 30-2-2 (21)
10. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 32-3 (24)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TIM AUSTIN**
Cincinnati, OH 24-0-1 (21)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 37-1-1 (26)
3. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 52-2 (26)
4. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 27-3 (25)
5. **EIDY MOYA**
Venezuela 15-2 (8)
6. **ADAN VARGAS**
Mexico 37-3-1 (23)
7. **HERIBERTO RUIZ**
Mexico 25-1-2 (12)
8. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 27-3 (16)
9. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 22-3-2 (13)
10. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 21-11-1 (17)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VASSILIY JIROV** Kazakhstan 31-0 (27)
2. **JOHNNY NELSON** England 42-12-1 (28)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK** France 27-2 (19)
4. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE** Guyana 17-0 (14)
5. **EZRA SELLERS** Washington, D.C. 24-5 (22)
6. **O'NEIL BELL** Atlanta, GA 17-1-1 (16)
7. **VIRGIL HILL** Bismarck, ND 46-4 (22)
8. **ALEXANDRE GUROV** Ukraine 32-3-1 (27)
9. **JORGE CASTRO** Argentina 119-8-3 (83)
10. **DALE BROWN** Canada 27-2-1 (18)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES Pensacola, FL 46-1 (37)

1. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI** Germany 46-0 (36)
2. **ERIC HARDING** Philadephia, PA 21-1-1 (7)
3. **ANTONIO TARVER** Orlando, FL 19-1 (16)
4. **REGGIE JOHNSON** Houston, TX 42-7-1 (24)
5. **MONTELL GRIFFIN** Chicago, IL 42-3 (29)
6. **DAVID TELESCO** Port Chester, NY 26-3 (21)
7. **JULIO GONZALEZ** Huntington Beach, CA 29-1 (19)
8. **BRUNO GIRARD** France 40-2-2 (7)
9. **LOU DEL VALLE** Bronx, NY 31-2-1 (21)
10. **CLINTON WOODS** England 32-1 (19)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE** Wales 33-0 (27)
2. **SVEN OTTKE** Germany 26-0 (5)
3. **BYRON MITCHELL** Ozark, AL 24-1-1 (17)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS** Davenport, IA 27-4-1 (24)
5. **THOMAS TATE** Houston, TX 41-6 (28)
6. **CHARLES BREWER** Philadelphia, PA 37-9 (26)
7. **ERIC LUCAS** Canada 35-4-3 (13)
8. **MADS LARSEN** Denmark 40-1 (34)
9. **MANUEL SIACA** Puerto Rico 16-4 (15)
10. **MARKUS BEYER** Germany 25-1 (10)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS Philadelphia, PA 41-2-1 (30)

1. **FELIX TRINIDAD** Puerto Rico 41-1 (34)
2. **HARRY SIMON** Namibia 23-0 (17)
3. **WILLIAM JOPPY** Washington, D.C. 33-2-1 (24)
4. **HOWARD EASTMAN** England 32-1 (29)
5. **ARMAND KRAJNC** Sweden 26-1 (19)
6. **ANTONIO PERUGINO** Italy 20-0 (7)
7. **TITO MENDOZA** Panama 27-3 (20)
8. **ROBERT ALLEN** Atlanta, GA 32-4 (24)
9. **HASSINE CHERIFI** France 32-6-1 (20)
10. **RHOSHII WELLS** Atlanta, GA 15-0-2 (8)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: VERNON FORREST Atlanta, GA 34-0 (26)

1. **SHANE MOSLEY** Pomona, CA 38-1 (35)
2. **RICARDO MAYORGA** Nicaragua 24-3-1 (22)
3. **ANTONIO MARGARITO** Mexico 26-3 (18)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD** Denmark 29-0 (23)
5. **ANDREW LEWIS** Guyana 21-1-1 (19)
6. **ANTONIO DIAZ** Coachella, CA 37-4 (26)
7. **MANUEL GOMEZ** Mexico 20-10 (16)
8. **CORY SPINKS** St. Louis, MO 29-2 (11)
9. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO** Italy 37-1 (23)
10. **DANNY PEREZ** El Cajon, CA 27-2 (17)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU Australia 29-1-1 (23)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL** Washington, D.C. 48-3 (29)
2. **ZAB JUDAH** Brooklyn, NY 27-1 (21)
3. **DeMARCUS CORLEY** Washington, D.C. 27-1-1 (16)
4. **MICKY WARD** Lowell, MA 38-11 (27)
5. **DIOBELYS HURTADO** Miami, FL 35-2-1 (23)
6. **ARTURO GATTI** Jersey City, NJ 34-6 (28)
7. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA** San Antonio, TX 43-5-2 (17)
8. **OKTAY URKAL** Germany 29-1 (9)
9. **BEN TACKIE** Ghana 24-3 (15)
10. **OMAR WEIS** Argentina 35-3-3 (16)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER Grand Rapids, MI 28-0 (20)

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO** Mexico 45-5-1 (41)
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON** Denver, CO 34-2-1 (16)
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA** Pittsburgh, PA 35-0 (14)
4. **LEONARD DORIN** Canada 20-0 (7)
5. **RAUL BALBI** France 48-5-1 (33)
6. **ANGEL MANFREDY** Gary, IN 39-6-1 (29)
7. **JUAN LAZCANO** El Paso, TX 29-2-1 (22)
8. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN** Uzbekistan 34-0 (22)
9. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ** Mexico 48-5-1 (33)
10. **COLIN DUNNE** England 37-1 (26)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ACELINO FREITAS** Brazil 31-0 (29)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR** Miami, FL 26-1 (16)
3. **JESUS CHAVEZ** Mexico 36-2 (25)
4. **STEVE FORBES** Las Vegas, NV 20-1 (5)
5. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI** Thailand 36-2-1 (33)
6. **PHILLIP NDOU** South Africa 26-1 (25)
7. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ** Bellflower, CA 36-3-1 (23)
8. **JOHN BROWN** Atlantic City, NJ 23-9 (11)
9. **JORGE BARRIOS** Argentina 33-1 (24)
10. **DANIEL ATTAH** Nigeria 20-0-1 (8)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA** North Korea 26-2-1 (7)
2. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ** Venezuela 22-0 (22)
3. **FELIX MACHADO** Venezuela 22-3-1 (11)
4. **GERRY PENALOSA** Philippines 44-4-2 (30)
5. **MARTIN CASTILLO** Mexico 21-1 (13)
6. **CELES KOBAYASHI** Japan 24-5-3 (14)
7. **PEDRO ALCAZAR** Panama 25-0-1 (14)
8. **JESUS ROJAS** Venezuela 35-9-3 (19)
9. **MAURICIO PASTRANA** Colombia 28-3 (18)
10. **IN JOO CHO** Korea 18-2 (7)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** Thailand 44-2 (25)
2. **ERIC MOREL** Madison, WI 31-0 (17)
3. **IRENE PACHECO** Colombia 26-0 (20)
4. **HAWK MAKEPULA** South Africa 20-1 (13)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL** Mexico 23-0-1 (17)
6. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT** Thailand 42-1 (14)
7. **MALCOLM TUNACAO** Philippines 11-1-2 (7)
8. **PETER CULSHAW** England 21-1-1 (12)
9. **GERSON GUERRERO** Mexico 24-4 (18)
10. **ADONIS RIVAS** Nicaragua 18-2-1 (10)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ** Mexico 50-0-1 (37)
2. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ** Nicaragua 31-2-1 (20)
3. **YOSAM CHOI** South Korea 24-1 (13)
4. **BEBIS MENDOZA** Colombia 28-1 (23)
5. **PICHIT SIRIWAT** Thailand 25-2 (12)
6. **NELSON DIEPPA** Puerto Rico 19-2-1 (11)
7. **JORGE ARCE** Mexico 28-3-1 (20)
8. **HIDENOBU HONDA** Japan 24-1 (12)
9. **ZOLANI PETELO** South Africa 17-3-2 (9)
10. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO** Mexico 65-8-4 (29)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOSE AGUIRRE** Mexico 27-1-1 (17)
2. **ROBERTO LEYVA** Mexico 21-0-1 (18)
3. **CHANA PORPAOIN** Thailand 47-2-2 (17)
4. **KEITARO HOSHINO** Japan 22-7 (5)
5. **NOEL ARAMBULET** Venezuela 16-2-1 (10)
6. **JOMA GAMBOA** Philippines 31-7-1 (22)
7. **KERMIN GUARDIA** Colombia 33-2 (20)
8. **DANIEL REYES** Colombia 27-1 (21)
9. **MIGUEL BARRERA** Colombia 18-0-2 (11)
10. **KHULILE MAKEBA** South Africa 16-1 (9)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

WHAT'S THAT TICKING SOUND?

With all due respect to Manuel Medina, whose punch output rivals that of the makers of Hi-C, it wasn't the IBF featherweight king's ability that was most responsible for Johnny Tapia getting tattooed in the face with leather the way he usually gets tattooed in the torso with ink. Medina, after all, has 11 career losses and he failed to even make the cut when THE RING selected the top 100 fighters in the sport last year. And that's some feat. We're talking about a list that's about as hard to qualify for as a gas station credit card with a 30 percent interest rate.

My feeling is that Tapia's poor performance in lifting Medina's crown that night (*shoplifting* Medina's crown is more like it) was more the result of the New Mexican's vida loca finally catching up to him. And that's hardly surprising. What *is* stunning, though, is that Tapia managed to fight so proficiently for so long despite the physical and emotional strain he had to endure. That included everything from learning the grisly details of his mother's murder to being declared clinically dead from drug overdoses on three occasions. From experiencing depression that nearly made him a suicide statistic to fighting 56 times and testing himself in five different weight classes.

His heart has been broken as routinely as some fighters' noses, and his eyebrows have more stitches in them than his robe does. That would be enough to burn out anyone, let alone a guy who is now 35, an age at which most featherweights are first-ballot selections for the Museum of Natural History. If Tapia is wise, he'll take Georgie Colon, Tony Paolillo, and Melvina Lathan, the judges from the Medina bout, out for lobster as a sign of appreciation for their generosity. Then he'll do everything he possibly can (including accepting the lesser purse) to get Prince Naseem Hamed or the Marco Antonio Barrera-Erik Morales II winner in the ring with him before the end of 2002.

Let's put it this way: When it comes to the amount of sand left in Tapia's hourglass, we're not talking Daytona Beach. If he wants one more hefty paycheck, and at least the chance to create another defining

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Tapia—old, slow, and lucky against Medina—had better find a superfight

moment to go along with his victory over Danny Romero in 1997, Tapia must square off with a marquee star soon. If he delays doing so, the next Medina (or worse) just might upset him and end his days as a serious player.

While Tapia is working on making that marquee matchup happen, four other lighter-weight fighters on the wrong side of the big three-oh, a dangerous age for little guys, ought to take notes. Junior welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu (who'll be 33 in September), junior featherweight king Paulie Ayala (32), IBF bantamweight titlist Tim Austin (31), and IBF junior flyweight titleholder Ricardo Lopez (35 in July) are all at that stage of their careers when they could wake up one day and discover that their skills have vanished as abruptly as a one-night stand who has slept off her vodka buzz.

Ask Mark Johnson. "Too Sharp" was anything but as he was stopped in eight rounds by Rafael Marquez in February. The 30-year-old Johnson, who had always possessed one of the game's strongest chins, saw it finally fail him as he was decked three times, the first knockdowns he suffered in a 44-fight career. When the chin goes on a fighter who has always been able to take a punch, he stops being a threat to his opponents and starts being a threat to himself.

George Foreman and Archie Moore notwithstanding, fighters can't go on forever. So who's the next to fall or need rescuing from the judges? Ayala, whose dominance of Bones Adams in their rematch was the Texan's first truly impressive outing in over two years, and whose lack of power and inconsistent defense could hurt him now that he has moved up in weight? Lopez, who can still beat you with any move in the textbook, but who has 51 fights on his odometer and too much scar tissue on his face? Austin, who once looked like a lock for Canastota, but has been too inactive, is a sucker for a left hook, and has a bad habit of fighting down to the level of his challengers?

Of all the aforementioned thirtysomethings, Tszyu would appear to be the least likely to topple in the near future. He is, after all, coming off a very impressive knockout of Zab Judah and an equally impressive 12-round boxing exhibition against Ben Tackie and seems to be more confident than at any point in his career. But he gets hit often, struggles with stylists, and even had a few Maalox moments against Oktay Urkal in what was supposed to be just a tuneup for the Judah clash last year.

Think about this: Tszyu was wobbled by Urkal. Tapia didn't deserve the decision against Medina. It can be argued that Ayala wasn't worthy of his wins against Tapia (especially the second meeting) and Hugo Dianzo. Austin was nearly kayoed by the ordinary Sergio Aguila in '99. And Lopez brings into every bout brittle hands and the possibility of busting open at any time. As good as these guys are, they're all walking tightropes. And yet, judging by the lack of entries in their datebooks, they don't want to admit it. At a time when they should be lining up the biggest bouts possible before it's too late, they're sitting on the shelf or contemplating fights we have no interest in seeing.

PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/DKP

How many more anonymous foreigners will Austin fight?

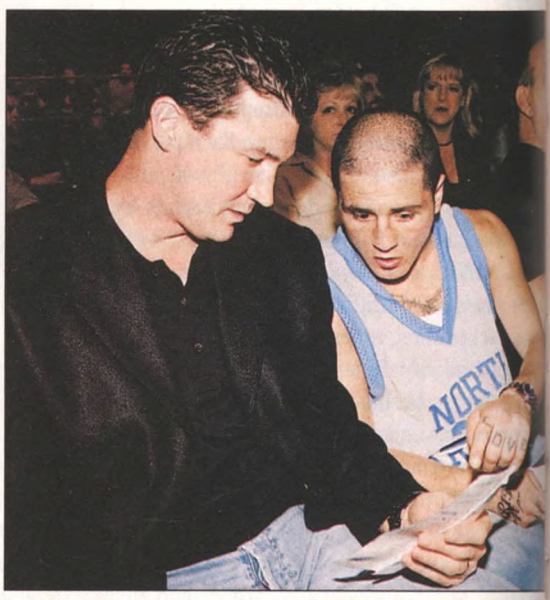
Tapia-Hamed has been in the planning stages for eons. Ayala is eyeing Wayne McCullough, even though most of us would prefer seeing him against Austin, Filipino powerhitter Manny Pacquiao, or the Barrera-Morales winner. Austin ought to be moving up four pounds to chase Ayala or Pacquiao or, if he remains at bantamweight, defending his crown against the red-hot Marquez. Tszyu needs to move up to welterweight to challenge the Vernon Forrest-Shane Mosley II winner or goad Floyd Mayweather into jumping up from lightweight. And Lopez, after first giving nemesis Rosendo Alvarez a third shot, ought to test himself against the bigger, younger, slicker Eric Morel. Unfortunately, we'll be lucky if we see even two of those matchups, let alone all of them.

Have managers and promoters become so fearful of taking risks that they'll let guys on the Hall of Fame bubble or in the twilight of their careers lose to a nobody rather than face one more big, heart-pumping challenge? How far we've come from the '70s and '80s, when the lighter-weight classes regularly featured star vs. star with no fear of what the consequences might be. Alfonso Zamora fought Carlos Zarate, who fought Lupe Pintor, who fought Wilfredo Gomez, who fought Salvador Sanchez, who fought Danny "Little Red" Lopez, who fought Ruben Olivares, who fought Bobby Chacon, who fought Cornelius Boza-Edwards, and on and on and on. The result was some of the most spirited battles in the history of the little guys and—get this—not a single loser's reputation was ever tarnished by his defeat.

Sure, it's tough to bring marquee matchups to fruition these days with all the squabbling over promotional rights, purse splits, television dates, alphabet designations, etc. But where there's a will … uh, you know the rest. If Tapia, Tszyu, Ayala, Austin, and Lopez want to play it safe, that's their prerogative. But as Tapia learned against Medina, when you're on the wrong side of the big three-oh, what looks pretty safe on paper has a way of turning awfully dangerous on canvas. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

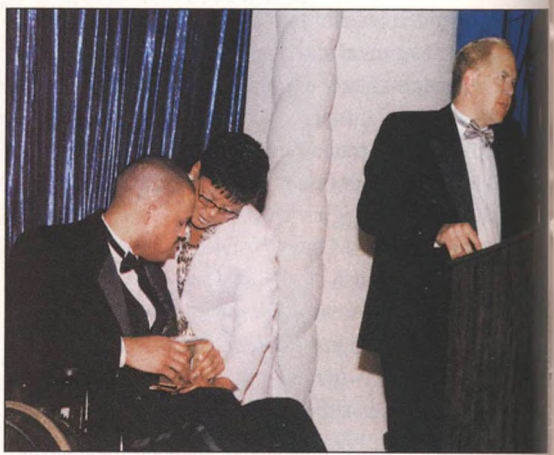
At this year's American Association for the Improvement of Boxing awards dinner, AAIB co-founder Stephen Acunto presented former heavyweight and light heavyweight champion Michael Spinks with the Rocky Marciano award. That's all well and good. But how promoter Butch Lewis got invited to anything related to the improvement of boxing is a little bit tougher to explain.



Hockey legend Mario Lemieux, who served as a guest ringsi scorer for Showtime on their April 13 broadcast from Chest West Virginia, gets some tips on how to score a fight from loca hero and lightweight titlist Paul Spadafora. "Give lots of poin for running," Spadafora advised Super Mario, "and alway remember, power doesn't count for anything."

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Although boxing is often referred to as a "manly art," there's still room for less-than-manly activities like undoing hair braids after the fight. After heavyweight Shannon Briggs' fight with Jameel McCline at Madison Square Garden on April 27, lightweight pal Brian Adams also removed Briggs' nail polish, plucked his unruly eyebrow hairs, and drew a bubble bath for him.



The most emotional moment at this year's Boxing Writer Association of America dinner had to be when photographer Ted Blackburn accepted the well-deserved Marvin Kohn Good Gu Award and brought ex-fighter Gerald McClellan and McClellan sister/caretaker Lisa on stage with him. Blackburn has contribute countless hours trying to raise funds for McClellan since he su fered brain damage in his 1995 fight with Nigel Benn.

PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/OKP

After a recent appearance on **The Howard Stern Show** *hyping their fight, former heavyweight champions Evander Holyfield and Hasim Rahman posed with Stern and sidekick Robin Quivers. By the way, the infamously potent Holyfield looks awfully chummy with Quivers, doesn't he?*

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Philadelphia boxing's two favorite Bernards, middleweight champion Hopkins and **Daily News** *writer Fernandez, shared the stage at the BWAA dinner on April 26 in New York. Fernandez, the president of the BWAA, presented Hopkins with the Edward J. Neil Award, honoring him as the Fighter of the Year.*

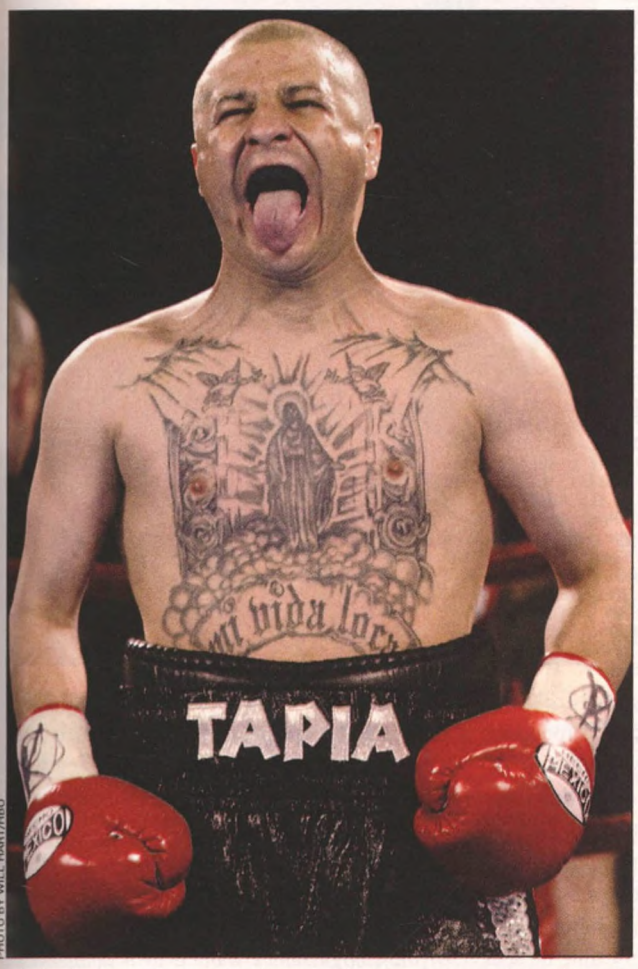


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

This is the face Manuel Medina should have been making after the decision was read following his April 27 fight with Johnny Tapia. Apparently, the judges gave points for doing a good Gene Simmons impression, as Tapia captured a majority decision after 12 hard-fought rounds that very few observers agreed with.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

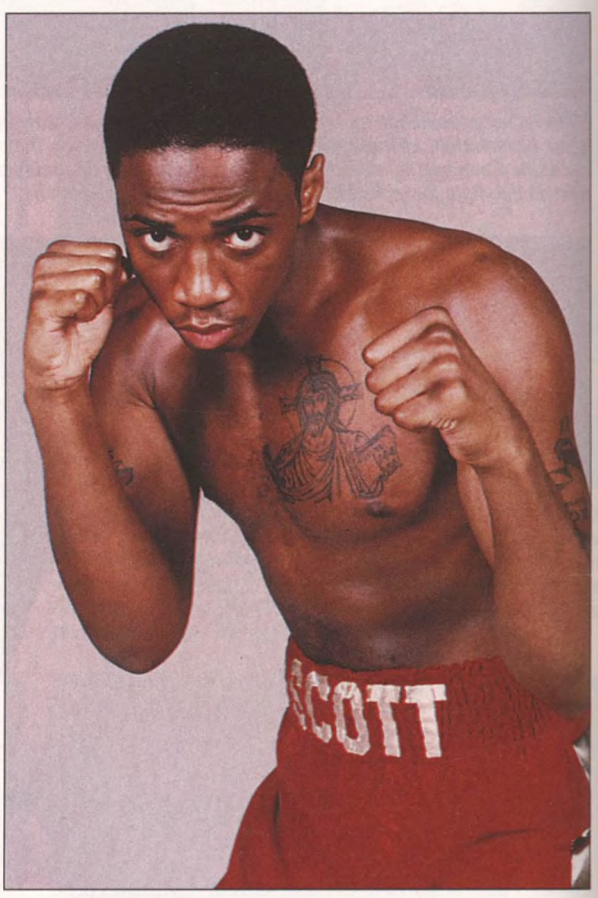
As he prepared to challenge Joe Louis for the heavyweight championship of the world in August 1937, Tommy Farr had several notable fighters drop in to give him advice on how to beat "The Brown Bomber." Unfortunately for Farr, some of the advice came from Max Baer and Jim Braddock, both of whom had been dominated and knocked out by Louis, so Farr seems to be tilting his head toward Harry Wills instead.

NEW FACES

MALIK SCOTT

Heavyweight

By Joe Santoliquito



PRO RECORD

2000		
Nov. 10	Tony Curtis Foster, Las Vegas	KO 2
2001		
Feb. 2	Jackie Beard, Columbus, OH	KO 3
March 16	Maurice Wheeler, Philadelphia	W 4
May 19	Robert Anderson, Uncasville, CT	KO 2
June 15	Tracy Williams, Philadelphia	W 4
Aug. 18	Ron Brown, Uncasville	KO 2
Oct. 13	Louis Monaco, Atlantic City	W 6
2002		
Feb. 2	Earl Hayes, Atlantic City	W 6
March 16	Curtis Taylor, Bushkill, PA	KO 3
April 27	Britton Thomas, Uncasville	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
10	10	0	0	6

Surviving the street hustlers and not having any money in his pocket was easy compared to the walk. That was the real ordeal Malik Scott had to endure. Each day after school it was the same routine: Malik would slowly stride hand-in-hand with his younger brother, Jamel Rucker. They would take a few steps, and then stop. Malik was too small at the time to lift Jamel. As a result, they'd walk together for three minutes or so, then stop again, and sit and wait for Jamel to catch his breath.

Scott was around nine years old, and walking home with Rucker made a 10-minute stroll turn into a half-hour journey. Along the way, the brothers would hear vicious taunts from passing kids. They'd say things like, "Look how he walks, look at the fat boy." Scott would clench his teeth. Other times, he'd clench something else, like his fists. But most of the time, he kept walking, supporting Jamel, holding his hand as he shuffled awkwardly, one foot in front of the other down the gritty North Philadelphia pavement.

Rucker suffers from Blount's Disease, a bone disorder that causes toddlers and older children to be bow-legged and heavy. In a way, Scott lives with it too, every time he sees his brother in a wheelchair at ringside, or during all those times he and Jamel, now 18, took that seemingly endless walk home from school each day.

That was a selfless time for Scott, a time that forged a special edge most fighters need. The experience ossified the lanky, genial kid into someone who was not afraid to step into a dingy Philly gym and try boxing.

Scott would often get into fights over his half-brother, but now the 21-year-old heavyweight with the 10-0 (6) record realizes many of the things Jamel wanted to accomplish are done vicariously through Scott.

"Oh yeah, I remember the things kids used to say to me and Jamel," Scott recalled. "You

(Continued on page 62)

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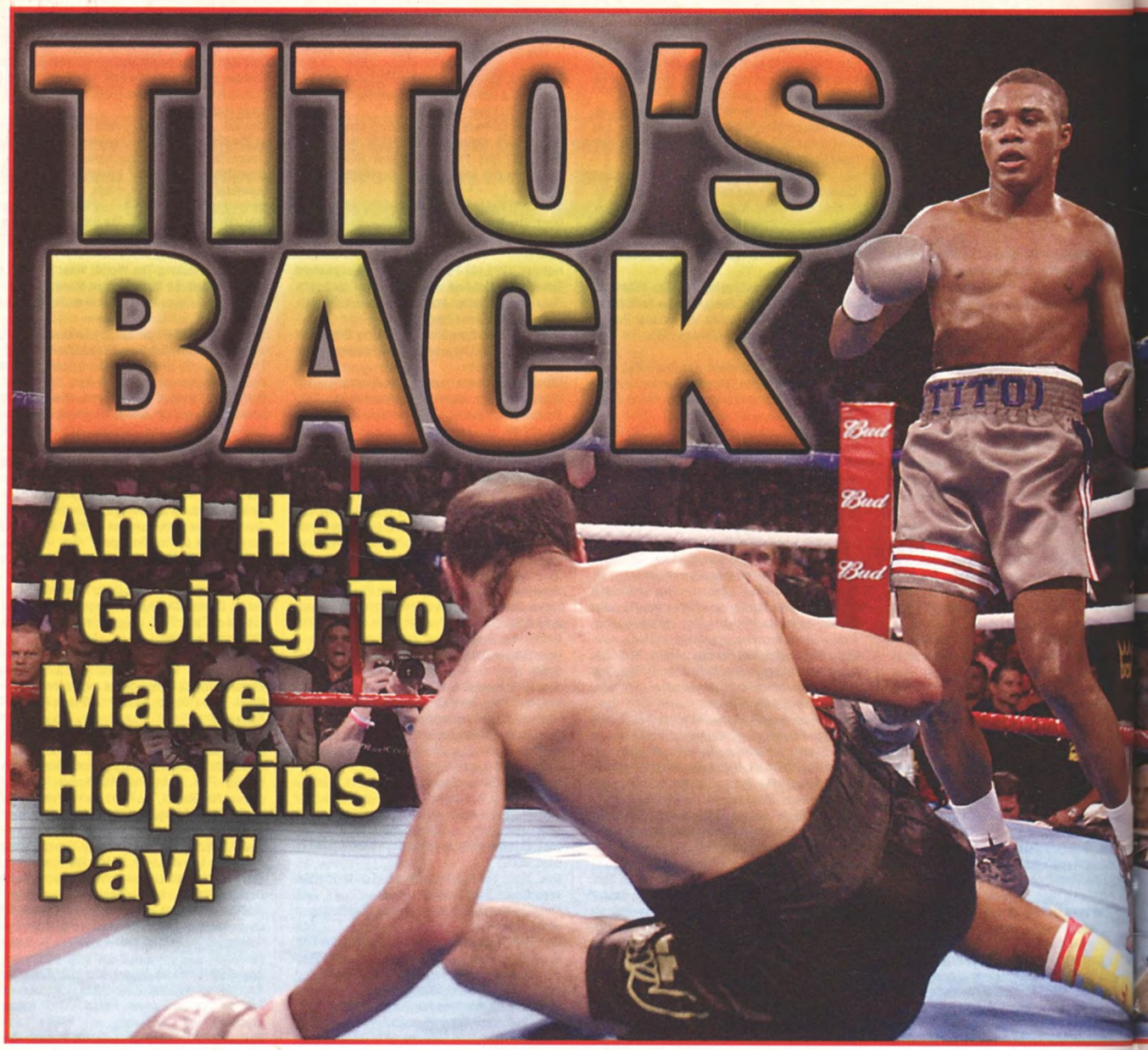
TITO'S BACK

And He's "Going To Make Hopkins Pay!"



In his first comeback bout, Trinidad showed no ill-effects from his punishing loss to Bernard Hopkins, stopping Hassine Cherifi in the fourth round. How much "Tito's" dominant victory over such a mismatched foe really means is a matter of debate.

By Johnnie Whitehead

It ended as so many of Felix Trinidad's fights do, with his dazed opponent being rescued by the referee and "Tito's" jubilant fans erupting into a fiesta-like celebration. But this time was different; this time Trinidad's victory marked the beginning of something he'd never had to face before—a comeback.

There were members of Trinidad's family who wanted him to retire following his crushing loss to Bernard Hopkins. But the pride that has helped make Trinidad arguably the greatest Puerto Rican fighter of all-time wouldn't allow him to slink into the sunset following the first loss of his career. No, he would have to try to avenge both his own honor and the honor of his country by fighting Hopkins again, and his May 11 outing against Hassine Cherifi was the first step toward that goal.

But just how significant was Trinidad's fourth-round TKO of Cherifi? Were there any signs that Trinidad is any better equipped to beat Hopkins now than he was before?

One observer who thinks Trinidad is on the right track is former WBA super welterweight and WBC middleweight titleholder Julian Jackson. Before the emergence of Trinidad in the mid to late-'90s, Jackson was boxing's preeminent knockout artist, a slugger who produced some of the most brutal, highlight-reel finishes ever seen. The kind of fighters who gave him problems, though, were skilled technicians, opponents who gave angles, who'd jab, step off, and potshot. In other words, fighters a lot like Hopkins.

Jackson knows what goes through the mind of a puncher, what governs his actions and conclusions. He knows the puncher's vulnerabilities, and how he recovers, if ever, from the sort of devastating knockout loss he usually inflicts on others.

Jackson observed Trinidad training for

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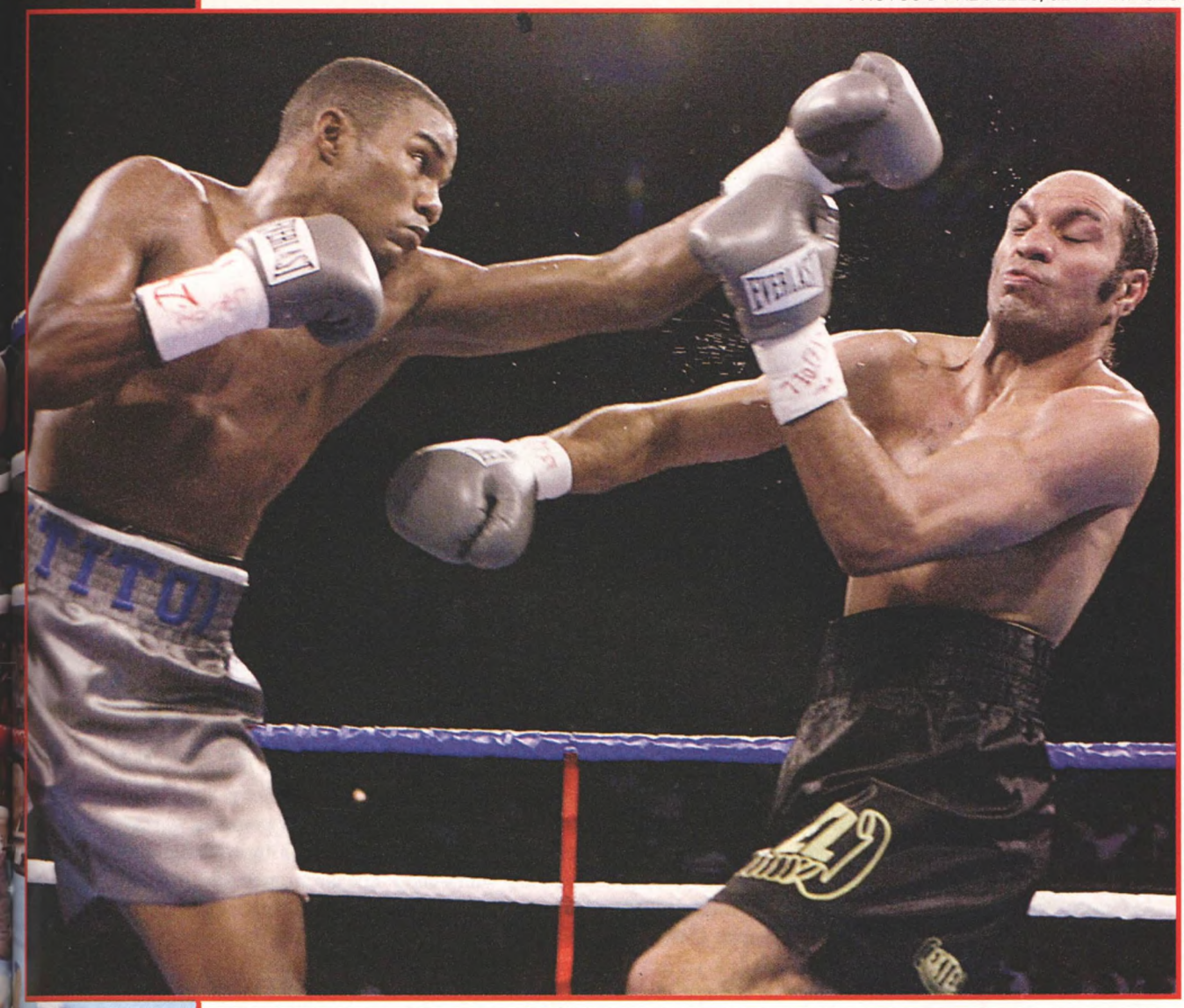

Trinidad put his frequently underused left jab to work against Cherifi, setting up the Frenchman for his powershots. Trinidad is trying to incorporate more boxing into his game in an effort to be better prepared for a rematch with Hopkins.

his HBO-televised comeback against Cherifi and took note of how hard Tito was working to correct the flaws Hopkins exposed.

"I was amazed," said Jackson. "He'll be able to deal with a boxer, a mover type. He's punching going back, going forward, and showing lateral movement. I believe he can beat Hopkins if he continues working the way he's working."

It took less than four rounds for Trinidad, 41-1 (34), to re-establish himself as a force in the middleweight division by administering a one-sided flogging to Cherifi, 32-6-1 (20). If nothing else, the former WBC beltholder showed guts. He came forward, even though he lacked the skill to accomplish anything when he got there. But Trinidad abused him in ways that Keith Holmes, William Joppy, and Harry Simon, all of whom had beaten Cherifi previously, couldn't match.

Before Trinidad dropped him three times, most notably with left hooks that caused Cherifi to hit the canvas twice in the fourth, he gave him whiplash by jamming his grill with jabs and right hands. In fact, Trinidad probably threw more rights in the first round alone than he did in his entire one-dimensional showing against Hopkins. He smacked Cherifi with a right to the forehead in the first—a punch Cherifi later admitted hurt the most—and floored him with another in the third. Every time Trinidad struck the affable Frenchman, it made him twist as if he was trying to dislodge a wedgie.

The punches that destroyed Cherifi proved that the power Trinidad showed against Joppy was no aberration. And anyone who calls his accomplishments suspect, or him a cheater because of the hand wrapping flap before the Hopkins fight, just can't bring themselves to admit the obvious: Felix Trinidad is a helluva puncher, even against 160-pounders. There was a reason Hopkins didn't engage in an all-out brawl with the Puerto Rican star. If

Cherifi, perhaps recalling the success Hopkins had against Trinidad with the jab, tried to do likewise, but he usually came out on the short end of the stick. Considering the gulf of talent between the pair, that wasn't very surprising.

Trinidad had been able to hit Hopkins with the kind of regularity he hit Cherifi and Joppy, he probably would've walked out of Madison Square Garden that night as middleweight champion of the world.

But therein lies the problem. Hopkins, even when he's in a rocking chair, would be more elusive than Cherifi. And even if he has no arms, the Philadelphia tough guy would never be as defensively irresponsible as Joppy, who was beaten inside of five rounds by Trinidad. Hopkins keeps a tight guard and doesn't offer his chin as a crash test device. For Trinidad to beat him in a rematch, he'll need more than his deadly punching power. He'll have to call on the other assets in his arsenal, such as speed, lateral movement, and punching while on the move.

It was the speed, said Cherifi, not power, that awed him most about Trinidad. The winner agreed, and said he felt "faster in this fight than my previous two fights." Maybe that was because his opponent was so slow. But after years of sparring with larger, stronger, harder-hitting partners to prepare for a physical fight, Trinidad has been working with a smaller, quicker variety to improve his reaction time.

He's still vulnerable to right hands—the punch Hopkins tattooed him with—and Cherifi landed a few in between his boogaloos to the canvas. Trinidad realizes he needs to correct this glaring fault. Even so, he still has an unflinching resolve when it comes to Hopkins.

"I'm still great," said Trinidad, after stopping Cherifi 2:32 into the fourth round. "If my next fight is with Hopkins, I assure you I am going to make him pay for everything he's said and done."

It's the incident in San Juan, when Hopkins showed ultimate disrespect by tossing the Puerto Rican flag (much like he would discard Trinidad on September 29) that still makes Trinidad's blood boil. If there's any hatred and evil behind those eyes, it's all for Hopkins. Unlike Roy Jones, who finds every excuse under the sun to avoid a rematch with the middleweight king, or Oscar De La Hoya, who balked at a second date with Trinidad by declaring he would stay at welterweight after saying before their fight he'd move up, Trinidad doesn't stutter or double talk when stating his intentions. There is no manager or promoter whispering in his ear and coaching him on what to say. He speaks from a heart that has led him to greatness—and ultimately to his demise at the hands of Hopkins.

Having an immediate rematch didn't make much business sense because the first fight was too one-sided to sell again to the public. Now, promoter Don King, who has both Hopkins and Trinidad under contract, said he'd look into making the rematch, but it probably won't be the next fight for either. HBO, which also has a contract with Trinidad, would have trouble squeezing the fight into its pay-per-view lineup, now that the De La Hoya-Fernando Vargas superfight has been pushed back to September. So expect Hopkins and Trinidad to have at least one more fight before meeting each other again.

Sugar Ray Leonard, who was among the 9,350 in attendance at the Cherifi fight, thinks the jury is still out on Trinidad.

"It's hard to gauge right now. What can he do that will nullify Hopkins' jab?" Leonard said. "We've all seen Trinidad fight one way, as the aggressor. But can he box? He's a better fighter when he's

attacking, and when [opponents] are stationary targets. Fighters like Trinidad have problems with lateral movement. He can cut off the ring very well, but with Hopkins he was trying to land one punch. Apparently someone told him one punch and it's over. Hopkins knew the jab he possessed would break down Trinidad's attack."

Cherifi's jab was far from a work of art, and he only managed to land it 16 percent of the time, according to CompuBox. Trinidad, however, could barely miss with his. He doubled and tripled the stick, and scored with 52 percent of the jabs he threw. Then he brought the heavy artillery behind it.

"Trinidad puts on a lot of pressure, and that does a lot to you. Most guys can't deal with that," noted Jackson. "He's dangerous because he doesn't back down. He shows the right hand, and the left hook is there. I always threw my right hand to catch you with the left hook, and that's Trinidad's style right now."

That method worked well, not only with Cherifi, but also with Fernando Vargas when Trinidad battered him back in 2000. When Vargas was introduced to the left hook in the first round courtesy of two knockdowns, Trinidad wasn't able to land it cleanly again until he began using the right hand to disguise it. By the 12th, Trinidad was double-stepping with his jab and landing right hands over the top. And the minute Vargas was expecting the right, Trinidad used it as window dressing to misdirect, and then exploded a left hook off "El Feroz'" chin to produce the first of three final-round knockdowns to secure the victory.

Where was that Trinidad on September 29? Why didn't he execute with such precision against "The Executioner"? Was it by his folly, or was it his opponent's doing? According to sources close to the Trinidad camp, father/trainer Don Felix told his son that Hopkins would be an easier mark than Joppy, which could explain Trinidad's boneheaded approach.

Hopkins, meanwhile, has also made changes. He fired longtime trainer Bouie Fisher, who orchestrated the fight plan that helped beat Trinidad. How much this will affect the middleweight champion in the ring remains to be seen.

Then there's the theory that Hopkins won't be able to duplicate his performance, that Trinidad will do much better in a rematch, and they'll meet somewhere in the middle in a much more competitive fight. And let's not forget that Hopkins will probably have turned 38 by the time the rematch happens, and though he always keeps himself in fighting trim, his legs may not be as dependable as they once were. It happened to Ali, Leonard,

(Continued on page 28)

Referee Ismael Quinonez counts over Cherifi following one of the three knockdowns he suffered. The brave Frenchman kept getting up, but was rescued after being floored twice in the fourth round.

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Felix Trinidad

(Continued from page 27)

and even Michael Jordan. It will at some point happen to Hopkins.

Trinidad might be better served if he were able to fight Oscar De La Hoya first. He'd get his mitts warm against a master boxer who is not as strong as Hopkins, but probably a bit quicker. If Tito can solve "The Golden Boy's" style and look impressive doing it, then the fruits of his new training regimen will be more apparent and his chance of avenging his lone loss will be significantly improved.

In Trinidad's homeland, however, the glass is always half full. They cheer when he feints, when he misses, and even when he gets hit. His faithful only see the good in what he does, and there's plenty of that. But reclaiming his position as one of the top pound-for-pound fighters in the sport won't come so easy against Hopkins. And dismantling Cherifi is only the beginning of a journey that figures to get much, much tougher before it's over.

Johnnie Whitehead is an editor for USA Today and a regular contributor to this magazine.

Clearly happy to be back in the win column, Trinidad raises his arms in victory following his dismantling of Cherifi. For the 9,350 fans on hand at the Roberto Clemente Coliseum in San Juan it was a welcome return to the good old days.

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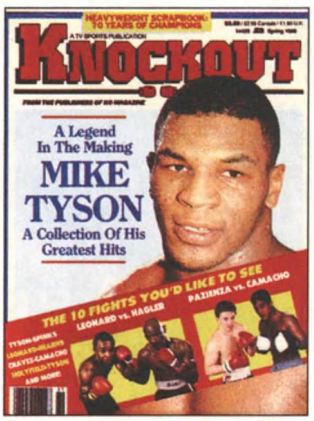

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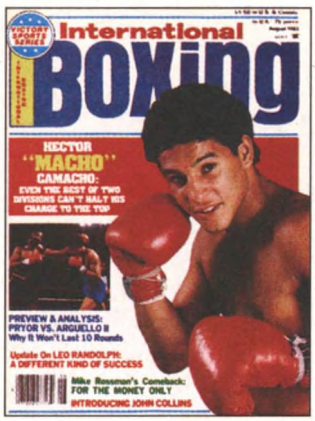

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AFTER TWO MORE CONTROVERSIAL DECISIONS, BOXING FANS ARE ASKING ...

What's The Score?

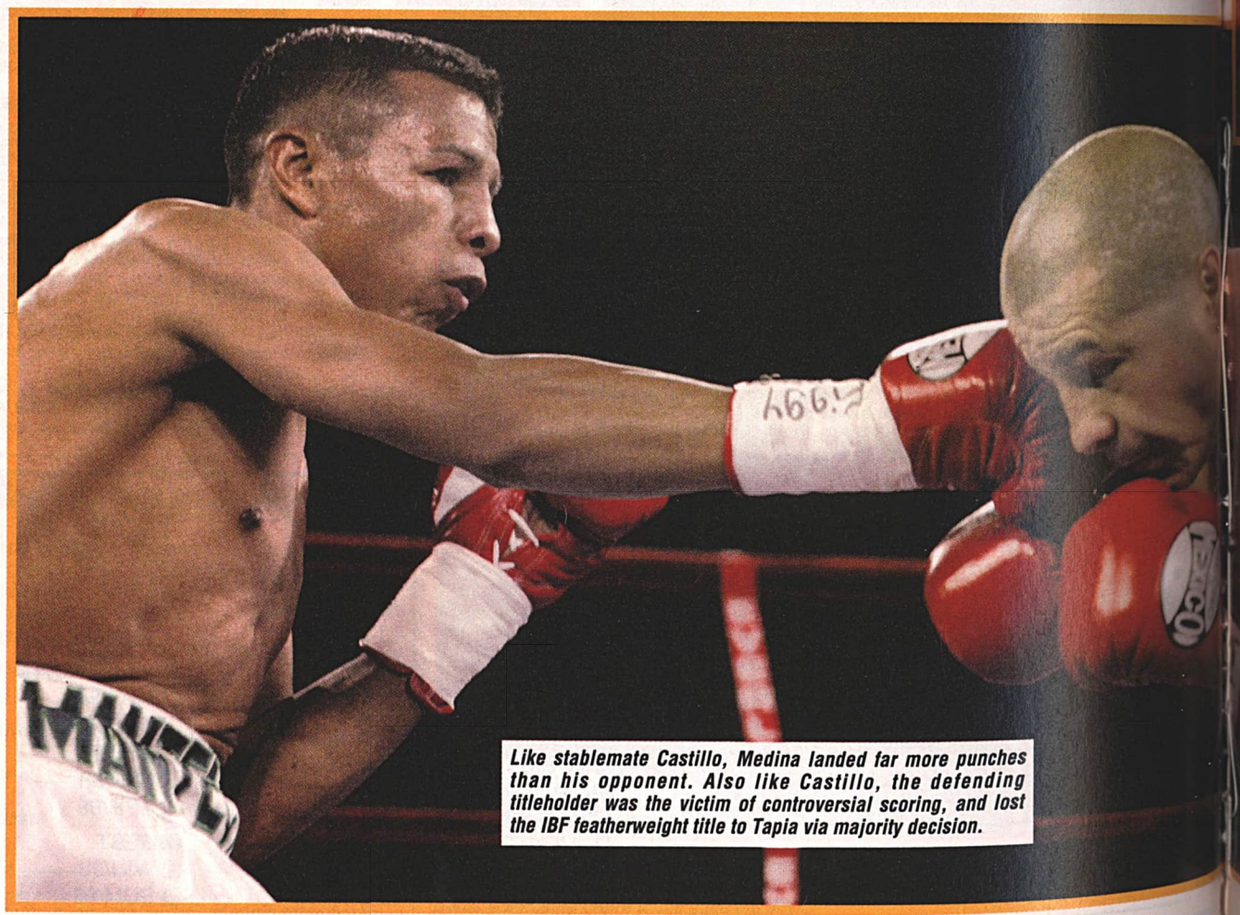
By Nigel Collins

Manuel Medina knew exactly what his fate was going to be because he saw the same thing happen to stablemate Jose Luis Castillo, a week before it happened to him.

"He told us before the fight that he was going to win, but that they would give the decision to Johnny Tapia because Tapia was the bigger name," said Larry Merchant, part of the HBO broadcast team for the Tapia-Medina fight.

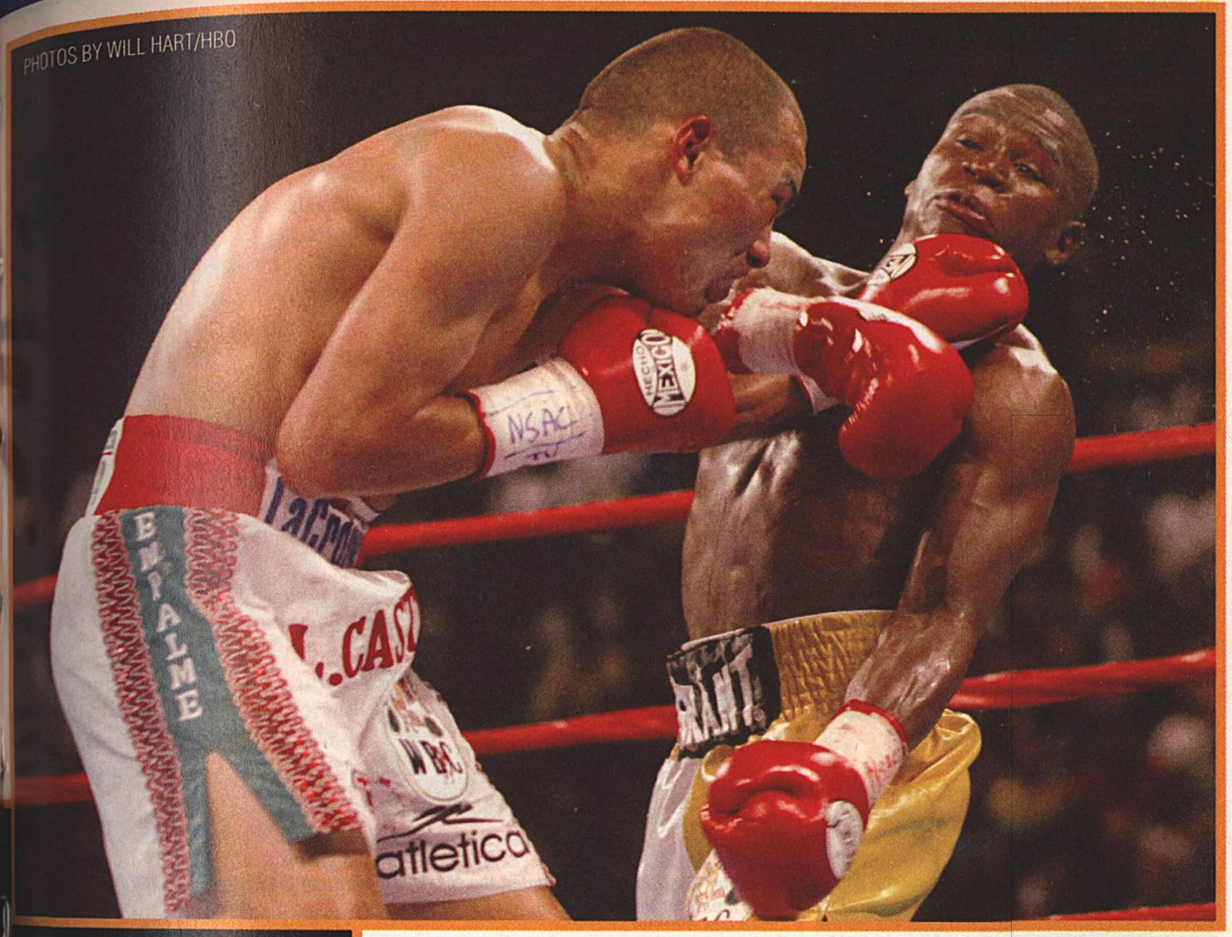
"It's business," said the sad-eyed Medina, an hour or so after losing a 12-round majority decision and the IBF featherweight belt to Tapia. "They want Tapia to fight Naseem Hamed."

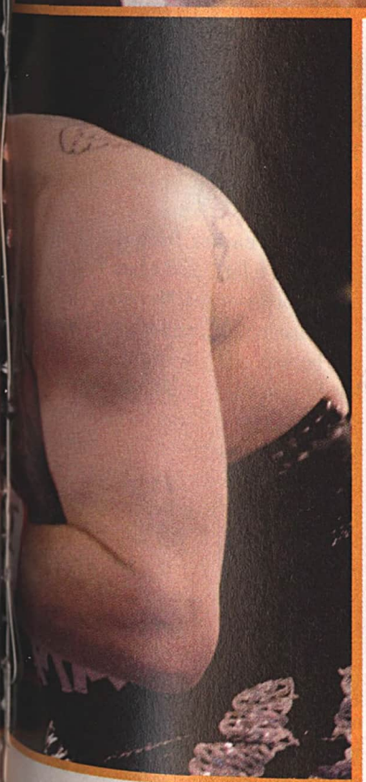
You don't have to be around boxing very long to become cynical, and Medina, a pro since 1985, had a resigned look on



Like stablemate Castillo, Medina landed far more punches than his opponent. Also like Castillo, the defending titleholder was the victim of controversial scoring, and lost the IBF featherweight title to Tapia via majority decision.

PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO





Castillo applied pressure throughout the fight, but did most of his heavy scoring the second half. Still, the fact that Castillo landed more powerpunches and more punches overall didn't prevent all three judges from giving the decision to Mayweather.

his battle-scarred face as he spoke.

"I thought [the fight] would be more difficult than it was," he said, speaking through an interpreter. "I think I only lost three rounds. The decision was not the correct one."

That's pretty much the way THE RING saw it, giving Tapia the first, ninth, and 10th rounds, and calling the seventh even, for a 117-112 tally in Medina's favor. But two of the judges appointed by the New York State Athletic Commission to arbitrate the fight, Tony Paolillo and George Colon, both scored the bout for Tapia, 115-113. The third judge, Melvina Lathan, had it even, 114-114.

True, Paolillo and Colon weren't the only ones who thought Tapia had won, but most of the general public and a meaningful portion of the media thought they had just witnessed the second ripoff in a major fight in seven days.

For the pair of Mexican nationals who ended up on the losing side of boxing's latest scoring controversy, it all began several months earlier when they began training together for their upcoming title defenses.

The 30-year-old Medina, a quick-handed cutie with more bounce in his legs than most fighters 10 years his junior, had an ideal sparring partner in Castillo, who was prepping to fight speedster Floyd Mayweather for the world lightweight championship. And the bigger, stronger Castillo was a more than adequate surrogate for Tapia.

Medina traveled to Las Vegas with Castillo, where he sat ringside and watched his fellow countryman give Mayweather the toughest fight of his career. When the bout was over, Medina and most of the crowd of 6,920 at the MGM Grand Garden thought Castillo had won. The three official judges, however, voted for Mayweather by scores of 116-111 (Anek

Many have questioned whether or not the trio of Mayweather-Castillo judges counted the Mexican's blows to the body. He ripped home a number of good ones down the stretch, but apparently received little credit for them.

Hongtongkam) and 115-111 (Jerry Roth and John Keane).

Somewhat surprisingly, many among the print media agreed with the official verdict, if not the margin. But HBO's on-air crew was outraged by the call. Harold Lederman, the network's "unofficial official," scored it 115-111 for Castillo. THE RING also had Castillo winning, 116-113.

The statistics compiled by CompuBox support those who thought Castillo was robbed. The defending WBC titlist landed 203 of the 506 punches he threw, as compared to 157 of 448 for Mayweather.

There was a similar division following the Tapia-Medina bout the following weekend. Again, some of the media went along with the official decision, but the Associated Press gave the fight to Medina, 117-111, as did Lederman. The stats gave additional ammunition to those who felt that Medina had been the victim of a rotten decision. According to CompuBox, the official loser connected with 273 punches, compared to 193 for Tapia.

There is also little doubt that the majority of fans thought both Castillo and Medina had been screwed. Indignant letters and e-mails began to arrive at THE RING's editorial offices almost immediately following the two controversial calls. MaxBoxing.com ran a poll, with votes running 3 to 1 in favor of the losers.

So what's going on here? Were the fights fixed? Or is it all just a matter of an honest difference of opinion? And how come it's always the bigger name fighter who gets the benefit of the doubt?

To start with, both the Mayweather-Castillo and Tapia-Medina bouts were not as easy to judge as, say, the Vernon Forrest-Shane Mosley fight, where the loser was dropped twice and dominated throughout. There were no knockdowns in either bout; none of the four fighters was badly rocked or hurt. So the most obvious criteria were not in play, which gives considerably more room for subjective judgment.

People who thought Castillo was robbed point to his aggression, especially in the second half of the fight. They also held Mayweather's running against him. Those who believe "Pretty Boy" deserved to win were impressed with his defensive prowess.

"Mayweather fought one hell of a defensive fight," said Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada State Athletic Commission. "Castillo was working hard and he was really trying to make the fight, but Mayweather made him miss a tremendous amount of punches. It was one of Mayweather's finest defensive performances, maybe his best."

Few of Mayweather's supporters, however, had much to say about his offensive prowess. Yes, he landed his share of punches, some of them flush, but Castillo hardly blinked. Not only was Mayweather's second foray into the 135-pound division (his first was a ninth-round TKO of Emanuel Burton in October '00) riddled with controversy, it also strongly suggested that his punching power will be far le

effective against bigger and stronger adversaries.

Also, you can't help but wonder if the judges ignored Castillo's diligent work to the body. When questioned, judges will invariably insist that they do count body-punches. But if that was the case, there's no way they could have had Mayweather winning by such wide margins. Even Bob Arum, Mayweather's promoter, saw that.

"I'm disappointed with the way the scoring went," Arum said. "This kind of margin was ludicrous. How could two judges [Keane and Hongtongkam] have given Mayweather the 12th round? How could that happen?"

How indeed?

From THE RING's ringside vantage point, the Tapia-Medina decision was an even bigger bummer than Mayweather-Castillo.

Medina's footwork was masterful, as he literally boxed circles around Tapia, who suddenly looked every second of his 35 years. Tapia, 52-2-2 (28), worked hard trying to cut the ring off and did land a good bodyshot every now and then, but he seldom succeeded in pinning down Medina, 60-12 (27), long enough to inflict much damage. Medina, meanwhile, peppered him with a seemingly endless series of straight counters.

At the postfight press conference, Tapia looked like he'd stuck his head into a hornet's nest. His puffy face, particularly the left side, was a mass of red welts.

"I'm not supposed to say this," said lead promoter Cedric Kushner, who has no professional affiliation with Medina, "but this young man behind me [Medina] got jobbed tonight."

THE RING couldn't agree more, but has no evidence that either the Mayweather-Castillo or Tapia-Medina fights were fixed. If we did, it would have already been turned over to the proper authorities. It is, nonetheless, true that the bigger name fighter won in both cases.

"The roar of the crowd and the glow of the star can in some way influence the judges," said Merchant, "but that's human nature."

At this juncture, the only serious regress for bad decisions is the rematch. Despite the angry reaction to the decision in the first Paulie Ayala-Bones Adams fight, everybody is satisfied now that Adams has had a second chance. The same was true in the Rafael Marquez-Mark Johnson case. Johnson left the ring after their first encounter thinking he was the winner, only to later learn that, due to a scoring mix-up, he had actually lost. But

(Continued on page 34)

Medina's quick lateral movement and counters confounded Tapia, who seems, at 35 years old, to be finally showing his age. To some, the questionable decision in the popular veteran's favor helped make up for his controversial losses to Paulie Ayala.

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Controversial Decisions

(Continued from page 33)

when Marquez knocked out Johnson in the rematch, it settled the issue.

A return bout between Castillo, 45-5-1 (41), and Mayweather, 28-0 (20), is already in the works for August, thanks to the willingness of both combatants, along with the fact that Arum smells a money-spinning pay-per-view. The WBC, whose belt Castillo wore prior to the fight, issued a statement supporting an immediate rematch.

There has not, however, been a similar statement from the IBF concerning Tapia-Medina.

"That's why the issue about the relationship between Tapia's promoter, Murad Muhammad, and Marian Muhammad, president of the IBF, has been raised," said Merchant.

Marian Muhammad was quick to point out that it was the New York commission that appointed the Tapia-Medina judges, not the IBF. But the fact that she was once married to Tapia's promoter leaves the impression of possible impropriety, an impression strengthened by the IBF's silence concerning a rematch.

"If Castillo gets his rematch, but Medina doesn't, that's not good for boxing," said Merchant.

If the Tapia-Medina and Mayweather-Castillo decisions were isolated incidences, it wouldn't be so bad. But they are only the latest in an incredibly long line of highly questionable calls, and an unhealthy number of fans are convinced that many decisions are rigged. And even if that's not true, the perception of wrongdoing is just as harmful as the actual fact.

Boxing's reputation, such as it is, still hasn't fully recovered from the scandalous draw in the first Lennox Lewis-Evander Holyfield fight, and the last thing the game needed was back-to-back weekends featuring dubious decisions in high-profile fights. More than 85 percent of respondents said yes to an ESPN.com poll asking the question, "In lieu of the Mayweather-Castillo and Tapia-Medina decisions, should there be reform in judging decision policy?"

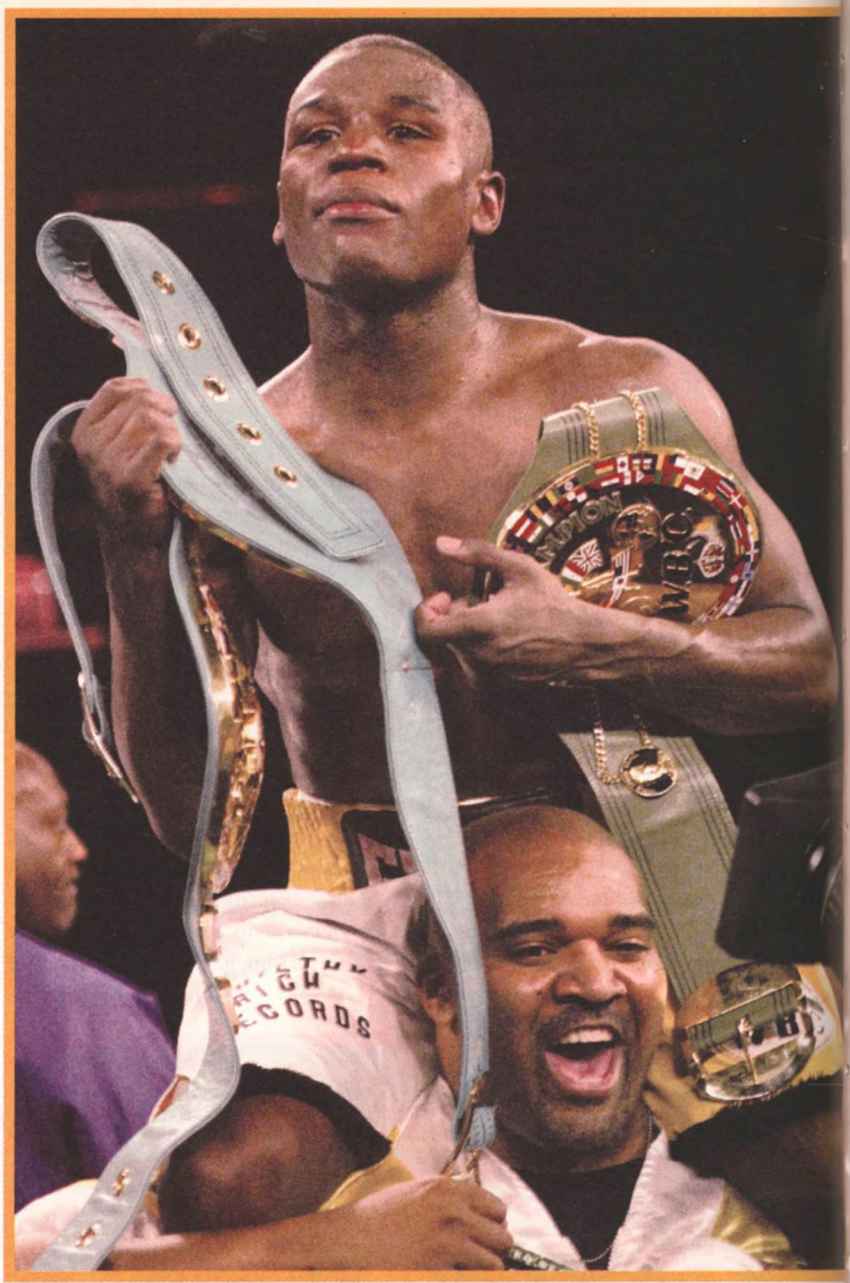
Is it any wonder that boxing is slipping deeper and deeper into minor cult status? Even lifelong fans are turning away, disgusted with watching boxers put their lives on the line, only to be cheated out of hard-earned victory. The big question, of course, is what are we going to do about it?

"One way to help restore confidence in the process is to try to build a wall between promoters and judges," said Merchant. "Right now, the promoters pay the judges, pay for their transportation, their lodging, and their per diem—directly.

"In the old days, a fix was when one of the fighters didn't try to win. That very seldom happens today. The contemporary version of the fix is what I call the 'institutional fix.' Judges know, even if it's subconsciously, that they will continue to get good assignments if they're friendly with and go along with the establishment. The officials should not be sitting down to a big dinner with the promoter the night before a big fight."

Ending direct payment of the judges by the promoter and putting a stop to fraternization between officials and promoters would be a good start, as would the third of Merchant's common-sense recommendations.

"They shouldn't announce the judges until an hour or two before the fight," he says.



Mayweather is paraded around the ring by a cornerman after the astonishingly wide decision "Pretty Boy's" favor was announced. The look on Mayweather's face probably had something do with the crowd's negative reaction to the decision.

A marked-up Tapia shows off his new IBF belt for the camera. That's promoter Murad Muhammad to the left, wearing a beard and glasses. The fact that he was once married to Marian Muhammad, currently president of the IBF, has raised questions of impropriety.

gested. "Of course, that's difficult to do if you're flying guys in from Bangkok and South Africa."

The sarcasm of Merchant's final remark speaks to the business-as-usual paradigm that has boxing in a stranglehold. Every bad decision chips away at what little credibility boxing has managed to maintain. Regardless of whether or not there was anything illegal or unethical involved in the Mayweather-Castillo and Tapia-Medina decisions, the fact that people are suspicious speaks to the unwholesome atmosphere in which the sport operates.

Mankind's primal fascination with ritualistic violence is not the only reason boxing has survived for as long as it has. The notion of fair play is the ingredient that makes it morally and socially acceptable, and when that element is removed, boxing sinks to an indefensible level.

We haven't quiet reached that point yet, but the slope is getting slipperier. And let's not forget that the fans, the folks who are most upset by injustice, are the ones paying the freight. Get enough of them angry, and there won't be anything left worth fighting for. ■

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IN A WARD: UNBELIEVABLE!

Battle With Gatti Is One For The Ages

PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

The two-way action and sustained fury of Ward-Gatti not only made it the clear frontrunner for Fight of the Year, but may have earned it a spot on the short list of the greatest brawls in boxing history. Expectations were high, but somehow these two veteran crowd-pleasers exceeded them.

By Eric Raskin

Conventional wisdom going into the Micky Ward-Arturo Gatti fight said that the only thing that could prevent this eagerly anticipated collision from being an instant classic would be if a cut caused the bout to be stopped prematurely. So of course, just 1 minute 20 seconds into the first round, blood was flowing freely from a gash just above Ward's right eye.

Yet, for observers who held their breath and prayed that the bout would not be halted prematurely, the red river running down Ward's face actually became a good thing. That's because it served as an important reminder—at times, when the action escalated to near-cartoonish levels of violence, the *only* reminder—that, yes, indeed, these warriors standing before us are human. They may have fought like machines, charging ever forward with no regard for personal safety. But they bleed, and they sweat, and they cry, just like normal human beings.

They aren't normal, of course. Normal human beings would never think to endure what Ward and Gatti put themselves through on May 18 at the Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Connecticut. Normal human beings can add up all the physical pain absorbed in their lives and not have it equal selected five-second stretches of what Ward and Gatti suffered in the mind-numbing (figuratively for us, literally for them) ninth round. Normal human beings tend to reach a certain threshold and, with their own best interests in mind, quit. For Ward and Gatti, either that threshold doesn't exist, or it's been reached and mentally overruled so many times that they've been left with an irrepressible instinct to soldier on.

Fortunately for boxing fans, what's not in Ward and Gatti's best interests *is* in ours. 2002 needed a real Fight of the Year candidate, and it got one—and then some. Ward's 10-round majority decision win over Gatti was one of those wars that left ringside journalists, some of whom have been watching boxing for half-a-century, struggling to name fights that rank ahead of it. At the conclusion of the ninth round, normally mild-mannered HBO analyst

Emanuel Steward declared, "This should be the Round of the Century!" Even with about 97½ years remaining before that superlative can be confirmed, you would be taking a serious risk betting against it. That's how special this boxing match was, and how special the gladiators involved are.

Career-for-career, it's hard to say which man is more special or has the more incredible story. Gatti probably has the edge in sensational fights. He had no less than five Fight of the Year-type battles going into the Ward fight: his miracle kayo of Wilson Rodriguez, his similarly fantastic blastout of Gabriel Ruelas (THE RING's '97 Fight of the Year), his bloody loss to Angel Manfredy, and his two frenetic clashes with Ivan Robinson (the first of which was the '98 Fight of the Year). Ward trailed by one in this loosely defined category, with four truly great fights under his belt. His back-from-the-brink knockout of Alfonso Sanchez doesn't count, since the storybook finish was the only highlight of an otherwise one-sided fight. But his come-from-behind wins over Reggie Green, Shea Neary, and Emanuel Burton (THE RING's '01 Fight of the Year) were all scintillating, as was his punishing decision loss to Antonio Diaz.

What's most amazing about what Ward has done is that the Green fight came four days before his 34th birthday, and the other three thrillers all came after that. Riding a four-fight losing streak in 1991, Ward, burnt out on boxing, retired at the age of 26. Three years later, he launched a comeback that is now on the verge of turning him into one of the world's most unlikely millionaires. "Irish Micky," who for years had to take blue-collar jobs from prison guard to steamroller operator to put bread on the table, could well make seven figures for his next fight. Not bad considering plans were being made before the Gatti fight for Ward's next bout to be a retirement sendoff at a minor league ballpark in his hometown of Lowell, Massachusetts.

It made sense to expect Ward to lose to Gatti, collect his $375,000 paycheck, and be one easy fight from placing his hook to the body on a shelf to gather dust. Ward seemed to be grinding down in his previous two fights, winning a much tougher than expected decision over journeyman Burton, and struggling to get untracked en route to an inconclusive technical decision loss to James Leija. Gatti, meanwhile, entered the Ward fight off his best win in almost five years, a fourth-round kayo of former titleholder Terronn Millett in which a seemingly rejuvenated "Thunder" boxed beautifully and barely got hit. What many people overlooked was that Millett was already a shot fighter with neither the pressuring style nor the durability to will Gatti away from his game plan. Ward, on the other hand, though probably a couple of years beyond his physical peak, had those qualities Millett lacked. Sure, he was the underdog. But, as he proved, he was much more of a live underdog than those who based their predictions on both men's most recent fights anticipated.

The Connecticut casino record crowd of 6,254 gave Ward a deafening ovation, to the point where it was impossible to tell in the arena whether ring announcer Mark Beiro's microphone was even plugged in as he introduced the New Englander. Gatti, meanwhile, got booed, probably for the first time in his life. Obviously, more peo-

In the early rounds, the fight belonged to Gatti, who was boxing well, slipping in fierce shots between Ward's guard, and moving away before "Irish Micky" could return fire. By the fourth round, however, Gatti's patient boxing was giving way to his trademark slugging.

A left to the body early in round nine put Gatti on one knee and turned the fight in Ward's favor. The remainder of that round featured such jaw-dropping punishment that HBO expert analyst Emanuel Steward called it "the Round of the Century."

ple made the trek from Massachusetts than did from Jersey City.

But for the better part of the first three rounds, Gatti, 34-6 (28), did his best to take the crowd out of it, boxing, moving, stopping to blast Ward with combinations, and generally looking like he did against Millett. Truth be told, the notoriously slow-starting Ward, 38-11 (27), wasn't any better than Millett—until the last 45 seconds of the third round. With blood streaming down from his right eye, caused by a first-round Gatti hook, Ward finally caught the Canadian transplant with his trademark left to the body, causing him to wince and back into the ropes. A wild back-and-forth ensued, and though Gatti was up 30-27 on everyone's scorecards when the bell sounded, the semi-skillful boxing match had more or less given way to the slugfest everyone was hoping for.

The fourth was a pivotal round for Ward, because his pressure showed its first real signs of turning the fight in his favor, and because of a debatable call by referee Frank Cappuccino. Ward won the round with the single biggest shot of the night to that point, a right hand over the top that shook Gatti. And he crept closer on the scorecards at the end of the round when Gatti, who had been warned for punching low in round two, connected with a hard left just below the beltline. Ward fell and pounded the canvas with his fists, and Cappuccino, too hastily for the tastes of some, took a critical point away.

The fifth was a Gatti round for 2 minutes 40 seconds, but Ward, who had been pressuring ineffectively to that point, exploded with a vicious, round-stealing, head-snapping assault over the final 20 seconds. The Mohegan Sun crowd erupted, reaching such a decibel level that Cappuccino never heard the bell ring. Fortunately, Gatti and Ward both did, and are the sort of sportsmen to stop throwing even without a ref instructing them to do so.

Gatti got back to boxing for substantial enough stretches to take the next two rounds. In the close sixth, he jabbed and moved in a way that created the impression he was in control, though the quality and quantity of punches landed was debatable enough that one judge gave the round to Ward. In the seventh, Ward landed just one telling blow, but he hurt his own right hand worse than he hurt Gatti when he connected to the head along the ropes with it early in the round. Ward continued to stalk after that, but Gatti's frequent combinations easily carried the stanza.

It was in the eighth that the fight began to shift from the highly entertaining, competitive battle we were hoping for, into a truly epic fight that exceeded the monumental expectations. Both landed hard bodyshots early in the round, and then Gatti moved into the lead with quick combinations, one of which was punctuated by an excellent right uppercut. But with 10 seconds to go, Ward dramatically stole another one, hurting Gatti

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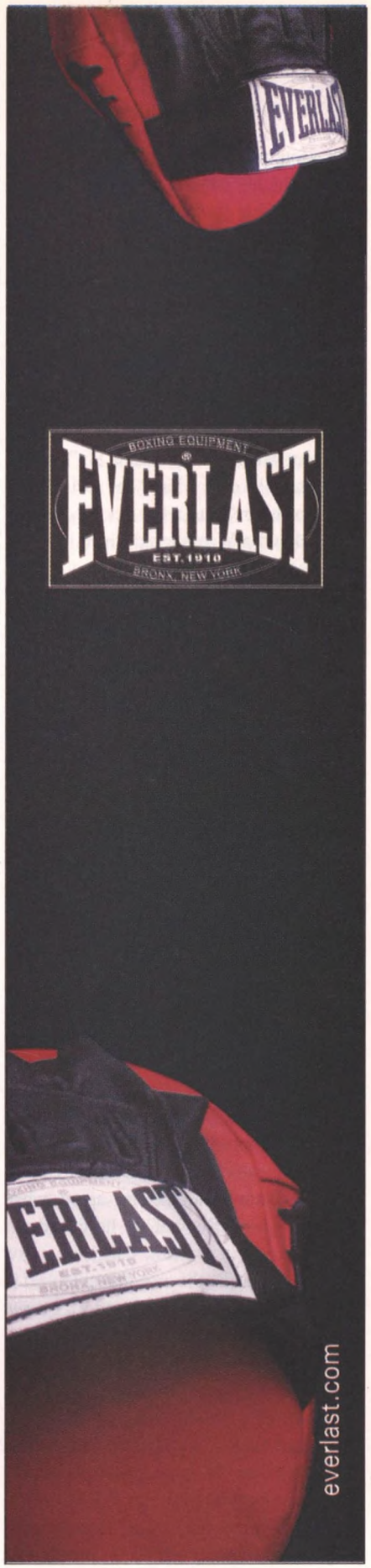


Micky Ward-Arturo Gatti

(Continued from page 39)

with a four-punch combination (the finishing right to the temple was the key shot), then landing a left to the body just before the bell that threatened to fold Gatti into the pike position.

Ward, sensing that Gatti might still be hurting, pounced on him when the bell sounded to begin the next round (a round that fight junkies will probably grow to simply know as "Round Nine," the same way that baseball fans know exactly what you're talking about when you say "Game Six" or football fans all know what "The Drive" and "The Catch" are). Just a few ticks had run off the clock when Ward tucked a hard left hook in just under Gatti's right elbow, on an exposed piece of his ribcage. Agony ruled Gatti's face; and he collapsed to a knee before beating Cappuccino's 10-count by maybe half a second. For the next 30 seconds, Ward was relentless, smacking Gatti from one side of the ring to the other and nearly forcing a stoppage. But there's a reason Gatti has a reputation for being most dangerous at the most unlikely times, and he reminded us of it when he stormed back on a punched-out Ward by dominating the middle part of the round with wicked bodyshots from both sides.

The pendulum was not done swinging, however. Ward regrouped and hammered the hell out of Gatti for the last 30 seconds, snapping his adversary's head around as though his neck was made of bubble gum. If it was any other fighter—anyone without Gatti's reputation for resilience—it probably would have been stopped. And with 20 seconds to go in the round, Gatti's trainer, Buddy McGirt, climbed onto the ring apron, white towel in hand. But before he could get Cappuccino's attention, Gatti let a few punches go, and by the time the ref looked in McGirt's direction, he'd retreated back down the steps.

"I thought I had him," Ward would say after the fight, "but he just kept coming. He's a warrior."

Nevertheless, the breathtaking ninth round cost Gatti the fight—much to the chagrin of his promoter, Gary Shaw. At the post-fight press conference, Shaw noted that had judge Dick Flaherty of Massachusetts not

The ecstacy, the agony, and the embrace: Ward and Gatti had understandably contrary reactions when the scorecards were read, but both warriors showed tremendous respect for each other when they hugged and spoke after the bout (top right).

given Ward a 10-7 round, the fight would have been a draw. But THE RING'S scorecard was identical to Flaherty's in every round, including the ninth. Though the subject is very much up for debate, this reporter felt that the knockdown, plus a two-to-one edge in brutal subsequent ass-kickings, including one that prompted a near-surrender from Gatti's corner, was enough to give Ward a three-point round.

Of course, that just made it all the more amazing that Gatti, barely responsive between rounds, his left eye almost completely shut, came out and won the 10th. Ward was totally exhausted, and Gatti, aware of how round nine had turned the fight around on the scorecards, attacked desperately. But Ward kept firing, creating one last murderous exchange at the end of the round before the fighters fell into one of the fight's few clinches as the bell sounded. The clinch, appropriately, quickly transformed into an embrace between two men who had just delivered the kind of magic, equal parts chilling and spine-tingling, that only the sport of boxing can produce.

The scores were almost an afterthought. Frank Lombardi had it even, 94-94. Flaherty had it 94-93, and Steve Weisfeld had it 95-93, both for Ward. Many in the press thought Gatti eked it out, but the controversy was kept to a minimum by the prevailing thinking that, round-by-round scoring aside, Ward beat up Gatti worse than Gatti beat up Ward.

But that's not to say Ward didn't get beat up plenty, too. During the 10th round, HBO's Larry Merchant said, "I am humbled by watching these two guys take the punishment they are taking." And those who don't respect and properly appreciate boxers would have been humbled by the honorable manner in which they spoke of the fight and each other when Merchant interviewed them afterward.

Ward: "[Gatti] has to prove nothin' to no one. He's proven over the years what he can do. It was a close fight; it could've gone either way."

Gatti: "I hit him with some good shots, but he kept getting stronger every round. It was a close fight; it could've gone either way."

Ward: "You can't take nothing away from Arturo, he's like a rock; he's like granite. My hand's hurting me, my elbow. What he's got in his head, I don't know."

Gatti: "For a guy that don't move a lot, he's got a pretty good defense. You don't have to move your head a lot to have good defense."

Ward: "If we can do [a rematch], we can do it, no problem."

Gatti: "I'd love to get a rematch if it's possible."

A rematch seems an obvious next step for both fighters, but there are reasons not to do it, not the least of which is the potential danger involved. Thankfully, although both Ward and Gatti went to the hospital after the fight concluded, both were released with a clean bill of health. But will boxing and these two magnificent gladiators be so lucky the next time? Time will tell, but it's possible that Gatti will never be the same as a result of the hammering he took in the ninth. So is it really advisable to dive right back into another 10-rounder with the potential to be as demanding as this one was?

Also, this fight was so perfect, a work of art despite not being contested at the highest skill level, that a rematch could disappoint and tarnish the magic slightly. Perhaps it's best to leave Ward-Gatti as is.

But if a rematch is the best way for these guys to make the money they deserve, then it's hard to stand in the way. Ward adviser Lou DiBella said he'd like to see both fighters make seven figures to do it again, and if that kind of cash is on the table, how can you say no? Frankly, there may be no other fight in the junior welterweight division, including a title shot against moderate-drawing champion Kostya Tszyu, that can guarantee such a purse. Besides, a fight with Tszyu could be just as dangerous to Ward or Gatti as a fight with each other.

HBO Sports Vice President of Programming Kery Davis spoke of a possible immediate return match at the postfight press conference, but was undecided as to whether it would be the right next step.

"So many people have come up to me already and talked about, 'Let's do a rematch,'" Davis said. "But I must tell you, sitting there as a boxing fan, all I could think of is that both of these guys deserve whatever they get from this sport. Whether or not they want to do a rematch or whether or not they want to come back against other people, HBO will be there to support them. There were no losers tonight."

Not the 36-year-old Ward, who fought off retirement and set himself up for a career-high payday. Not the 30-year-old Gatti, who was also expected to be retired by now, but instead added to his remarkable resume and increased both his popularity and his earning power in defeat. Not HBO, not the media, not the fans. There were no losers. Except the poor souls who didn't see and share in the majesty of this spectacle. ■

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Fisher, an ever-present toothpick in his mouth, is finally getting the credit he deserves as one of the game's foremost trainers. He received the Futch-Condon Award from the Boxing Writers Association of America as 2001's Trainer of the Year.

By Tim Graham

Like most kids, English Fisher couldn't wait until he turned 16 years old, the age of freedom for America's youth. His dreams, however, had nothing to do with obtaining a driver's license.

Fisher desperately wanted to quit school, and 16 was the age a fellow could make that decision on his own. His life already was a grind. He had grown weary. His parents were sharecroppers from Sumpter, South Carolina, before they moved to Philadelphia in search of a better life. A scant few years later, Fisher's mother died. He was 13, the second-oldest of four sons.

So Fisher worked into the wee hours of the morning to help put food on the table. He shined shoes, collected junk and milk bottles, recycled discarded clothes and rags. Sometimes with zero sleep he arrived at the schoolyard to resume whatever fist-

Finally Recognized At 75

BOUIE FISHER GETS REWARDED FOR HIS STRUGGLES

fights were left unfinished the day before.

"I can remember being 30 blocks from home at 6 o'clock in the morning, out trying to hustle for a dollar, cleaning out basements," Fisher recalled. "I still had to get home, get changed, and get to school."

Fisher, 75, utters one particular word over and over again when reflecting on his life. "Struggle" often falls off his lips with a sigh of relief tinged with pride.

"My life has been one heckuva struggle," said Fisher, the Champ's Gym fixture who is better known in hardcore boxing circles by his nickname. Now, casual boxing fans outside Philly are starting to appreciate Bouie Fisher. A man with an eighth-grade education, after decades of toiling in near-anonymity, is finally being recognized as one of boxing's most brilliant educators.

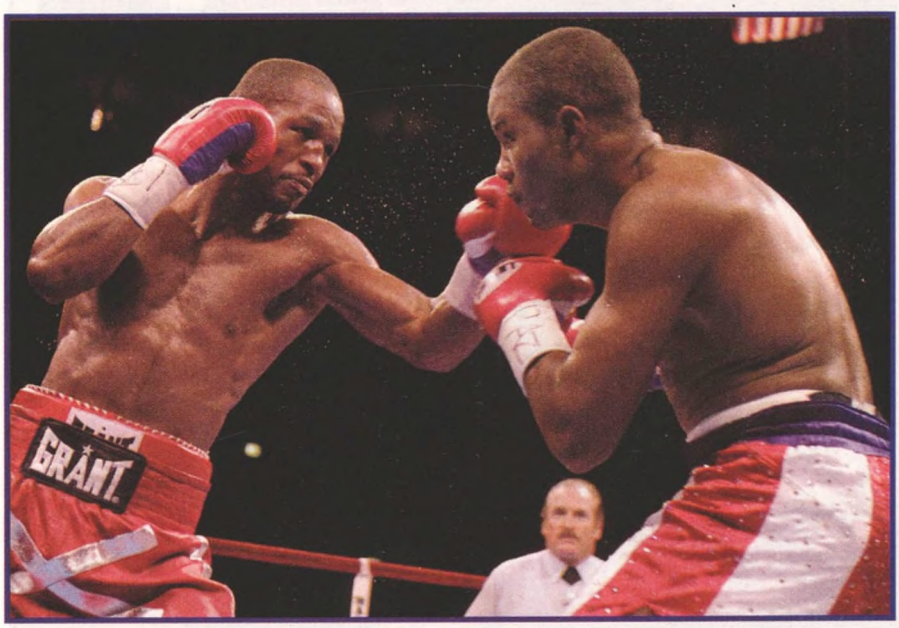
"There's not too many of those guys around, guys like Gil Clancy, Angelo Dundee, and Georgie Benton. Bouie belongs in that group," says Hall of Fame trainer Lou Duva. "Bouie is a great trainer."

The Boxing Writers Association of America gave Fisher the 2001 Futch-Condon Award as Trainer of the Year for helping Bernard Hopkins defend the middleweight title a record-tying 14th time with a shocking victory over the heavily favored Felix Trinidad. The feat opened doors for Fisher, now the trainer of heavyweight Hasim Rahman.

"Many people in our industry are much like Bouie in that they put a lot of time and effort into the business, but until they get that one big moment, they don't get discovered," said Emanuel Steward, another Hall of Fame trainer. "It's been gratifying to me to see Bouie get honored, because he reflects what true boxing people are all about."

Fisher has worked with dozens of amateurs and pros such as Bennie Briscoe, Jesse Ferguson, Eugene "Cyclone" Hart, Tony Martin, and Will "Stretch" Taylor. But the veteran trainer didn't gain fame until his 13-year relationship with Hopkins reached a glorious juncture that emotional night in Madison Square Garden. The United States was still reeling from the September 11 terrorist attacks. A brisk walk from the legendary boxing venue, workers were digging through the World Trade Center rubble for bodies and answers. Hopkins-Trinidad had been scheduled for September 15, but it was pushed back because of the tragedy.

Most boxing observers thought the postponement merely delayed the inevitable. Trinidad was young, undefeated, and coming off a string of victories over Pernell Whitaker, Oscar De La Hoya, David Reid, Fernando Vargas, and William Joppy. Trinidad topped many lists



It was Bernard Hopkins' upset TKO of Felix Trinidad that made people sit up and take notice of what an outstanding trainer Fisher is. Together, he and Hopkins came up with a masterful fight plan that ended "Tito's" 40-fight unbeaten streak.

ranking the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world. He seemed unstoppable.

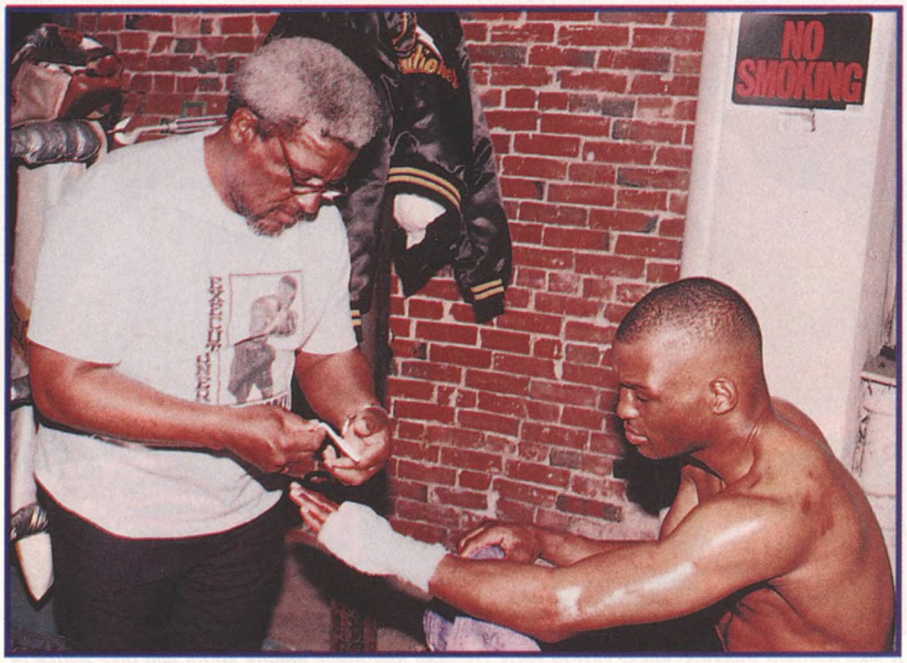
Hopkins, meanwhile, was 36 and known more for his dirty ring tactics than for pure boxing brilliance. While he was one fight away from tying Carlos Monzon's record for middleweight title defenses, some felt Hopkins had retained his belt through smoke and mirrors. His ledger certainly wasn't littered with household names. It also included two losses.

The atmosphere that night could have been intimidating. Hopkins, however, was cold and calculating. The game plan he and Fisher devised was not that of a Philly street brawl, as had been expected, but of boxing skills, lateral movement, and counterpunching. Hopkins easily outboxed his overrated foe for 11 rounds and then, instead of coasting to certain victory, brutalized Trinidad to record a 12th-round technical knockout.

"Obviously, Bouie was the architect of a masterpiece in terms of what Hopkins did to Trinidad," HBO boxing analyst Larry Merchant said. "That speaks of a guy who is an old-fashioned Philadelphia trainer who knows when to unleash the dogs and knows when to keep them under control."

Fisher started learning the sport at a young age, partly out of curiosity and partly out of necessity. He was a kid with playful boxing fantasies, but he had to put his rudimentary skills to work when the Fishers moved to the inner city.

Hopkins and Fisher pose for The Ring's photographer a few days after "The Executioner" decisioned Keith Holmes to take the WBC title. Sadly, the pair has since split after being together for 13 years.



Fisher tapes Hopkins' hand wraps in preparation for a workout at Philadelphia's famous Champ's Gym. Fisher believed in Hopkins when few others did, and even gave him a job when he got out of jail.

"I was always in boxing because I was fighting all the time," Fisher said. "We would be Jack Johnson or Joe Louis out in the front yard or out in the street. And then when we came north and got in the Philly neighborhoods, I fought every day because I was new in the neighborhood and the other kids were testing me.

"The police told us to show up at the PAL gym, and there were about 10 or 12 of us kids. Most of them quit, but not me. It gets in your blood and you just stick with it."

It was the early-1940s, and the dominant presence of Joe Louis galvanized Fisher's boxing fervor. Louis and track star Jesse Owens were giving black Americans a source of pride they had never before experienced in sports.

Disappointed and hurt, Fisher dropped out of boxing for a few years after heavyweight Jesse Ferguson (pictured) deserted him for another trainer. Fisher claims the new trainer rushed Ferguson, who ended up a journeyman.

"With Louis coming in behind Jack Johnson, there was a little different flavor there," Fisher said. "People were naming their children Joe Louis. People would listen to Louis' fights in the street because there were only two or three radios on our block. Then, after the fight, people broke into the streets and had a party."

Fisher began boxing as an amateur right around the time he dropped out of school. A few years later he was offered $400 to fight as a professional. But his prize fighting career ended when he decided he couldn't dedicate himself to the sport and still make enough money to raise his family. By then, he and his wife had already had the first of their eight children.

"My family was starting and I had to make a living," Fisher said. "I had to do something to get money, and I wasn't going to do anything to put me jail. I did everything to make a living except put a gun in my hand and sell drugs."

Fisher worked a series of industrial jobs, working in sewers, tunnels, and high-rise construction. The noise from the heavy machinery caused him to lose 35 percent of his hearing. But, no matter how painfully Fisher paid the bills, he couldn't keep himself from hanging out at Champ's Gym.

"I never left the gym really. I just stopped boxing," Fisher said. "Sometimes I would be in the gym until one or two o'clock in the morning, talking about this fight and that fight. They would tell you about training camps and it was like you were there. It was like watching it on television."

No one taught Fisher more about boxing than Quenzell McCall, a mainstay at Champ's Gym at the time. Fisher not only liked to talk boxing, but he also enjoyed helping out by doing such things as putting the gloves on fighters or timing drills. He couldn't help but learn the sport through osmosis.

"Every great trainer that came out of Philadelphia—except one [Jack Blackburn]—I had a chance to be around," Fisher said. "I had a chance to learn from these guys. They showed me things. If you wanted to learn, you would learn.

"I took a page from this book, a page from that book. After a while, I had a book of my own."

Fisher went on train a series of modestly successful amateurs and pros. It appeared he had finally guided one to the big time in the early-'80s, when Jesse Ferguson emerged as a heavyweight contender. Then an incident involving Fisher's chief second, Roman Fuller, personally wounded Fisher so much the trainer left the sport for three years, draining the passion out of him.

"Roman was a personal friend of mine throughout the struggles," Fisher said. "He lived with me at times, and I slept in his bed when I didn't have one. I was fair with him. But when the money came around for Jesse, every time he fought, I gave my friend big shares of money. But he was never satisfied.

"My friend got into Jesse's ear. He started telling Jesse he could get him more money. They thought they could make it on their own. He got Jesse in over his head, got him beat up. He became a sparring partner. That hurt me. They were wrong.

"They still worked at Champ's, and I didn't want to be associated with them. I had no other place to go. I had enough of boxing for a while."

Fisher swore off training boxers and avoided the sport until a friend coaxed him into stopping by Champ's Gym to check

(Continued on page 46)

Bouie Fisher

(Continued from page 45)

out a former amateur stud who had recently been released from Graterford Prison.

"This guy came in," Fisher recalled of that fateful day in 1988. "I kept talking to the guy and something appeared to me. All the trainers I ever talked to said, 'One day you'll know the one. He'll walk in and you'll see something. You might not recognize it right away, but so help me, you'll notice.' It seemed like something opened up in our conversation. He kept giving me the right answers. He was a student, ready to learn and ready to be taught."

That pupil was Bernard Hopkins. The future Hall of Famer lost his pro debut to Clinton Mitchell, and Fisher ordered Hopkins to drop a few weight classes. Hopkins, then 180 pounds, didn't fight for the next 16 months to hone his skills. Shortly thereafter, Hopkins was thriving as a middleweight.

"Bouie helped Bernard become a virtuoso performer," Merchant said. "Bernard is versatile enough that he can streetfight, and he can fight with controlled aggression. There are not too many fighters who are capable of doing both. Bouie was beside him all the time when Bernard was in the wilderness."

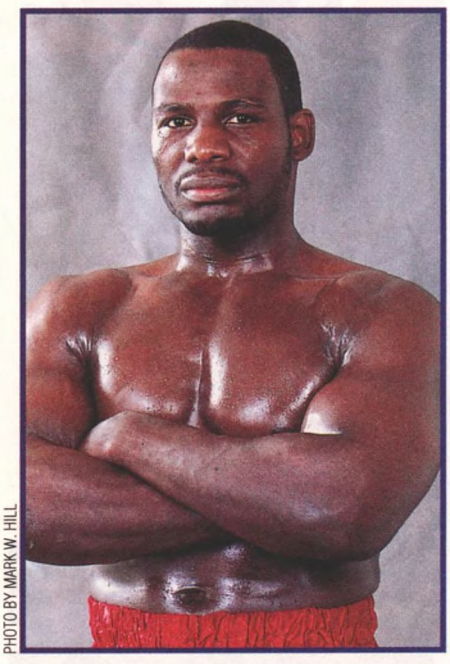


PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Reaping the rewards: Fisher is now training former heavyweight champion Hasim Rahman. Hopkins predicted Fisher will help "The Rock" regain the title before the end of next year.

At the Boxing Writers Association of America dinner in April, Fisher accepted the Futch-Condon Award as 2001 Trainer of the Year. Later that same evening, Hopkins was honored as Fighter of the Year.

Hall of Fame trainer Angelo Dundee compared Fisher-Hopkins to the relationships between himself and Carmen Basilio, Charley Goldman and Rocky Marciano, and Ray Arcel and Roberto Duran.

"Fisher must be a tremendous guy to handle an intricate individual like Hopkins," Dundee said. "Fisher must have had the proper technique to bring out the best of him. He knew his guy. It has to be chemistry. Fisher fit the blend."

Adds Fisher: "He did everything I asked him to do. He's the greatest middleweight in the world since the great Ray Robinson. This guy could set records that will take 40 years to break."

But if Hopkins sets any more records, he will do so without Fisher in the corner. Their long bond was broken—both claim permanently—over reasons neither side is willing to divulge. The rift began between Hopkins and James Fisher, Bouie's son, who worked in the Hopkins camp, but according to sources close to the situation, money has been the main bone of contention. Still, Hopkins hasn't forgotten how much Fisher has done for him.

"Bouie played an important role," Hopkins said. "He was like a second father, especially after my father passed away [in '96]. Bouie gave me advice. He told me, 'Don't be like other fighters with your money.' He watched fighters come up and win titles and then go broke. Those guys are penniless and punchdrunk. That's a helluva feeling.

"Bouie was always there. He was more than just a trainer. I'll always love him. There always will be a part of history in my heart for Bouie. No matter what he says or I say, I'll always have that in my heart without a question mark. You can't erase 13 years."

Fisher has moved on and is concentrating on the future. His new goal in returning Rahman to the heavyweight championship.

"If Bouie's given an opportunity to show how great of a trainer he was even before September 29, then Rahman will win the heavyweight championship before the end of next year," Hopkins said. "Then other fighters will come to him. Fighters with potential who have stalled out, they ought to call Bouie Fisher. He is a guy that will be there for you every day, and he will outlast you."

Fisher isn't overly used to polishing fighters who already have a sound boxing background, but he is looking forward to doing it more.

"It's putting the icing on the cake after it's already been baked," Fisher said. "These fighters are already made. This is easy. This is fun, the best part of my life. I'm reaping the rewards of my struggles."■

Tim Graham covers boxing for the Buffalo News and is an occasional contributor to this magazine.

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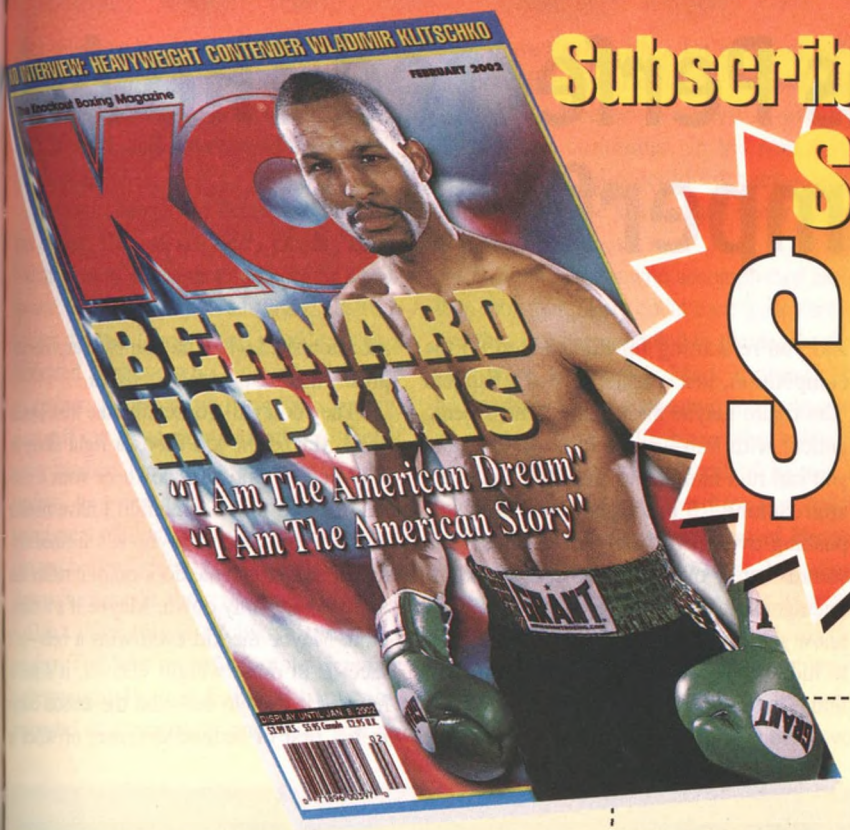

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

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HOW TO RUIN A PROSPECT

Boxing Has Perfected The Art Of Imperfection

By William Dettloff

If you've been following this game for a long time, you've seen it happen dozens of times, too many times to remember all the names. It's always the same: Hotshot kid explodes out of the amateurs, signs a fat contract with a well-known promoter, and starts tearing through the pros. For a while, the guys he beats are terrible—amateurs were harder—but you figure what the hell, he has to get his feet wet.

Soon, he has a dozen fights under his belt and you're waiting for him to step up the competition, just a little. Doesn't happen. You figure maybe his management is being patient with him—move him too fast, and you can ruin him and all that. But soon he's approaching 20 pro fights, and he's still pushing over guys from the Midwest with records barely over .500. By now you know management isn't just being patient. They know something you don't and they're trying to hide it. Or worse, they don't know anything, but they're not taking a chance either way. So they get him to a big fight and they act astonished when he bombs. Surprise, surprise. Another prospect vanishes.

They don't all go exactly like that. Details vary. Maybe the kid drops a fight along the way or gets knocked down or wins a decision or two that he shouldn't have because he's the prospect. Maybe it's a rated contender that closes the door on him rather than a guy on the way down. Maybe it's a champion. Maybe the kid even wins a belt—let's face it, in most weight classes, it's not as hard as it used to be—and the lesson comes in his first or second defense, or when he starts believing his hype and tries to unify against a real prize fighter. Hey, sometimes the pampered kid turns out to be the real thing after all, and didn't need coddling in the first place.

You can change the details around this way or that. They all fit. Gerry Cooney made it all the way to a title shot and became a millionaire. Same with Michael Grant, albeit to a lesser degree. Jorge Luis Gonzalez was a celebrated amateur who flopped when the competition got too heavy, and there's a big, giant stiff out there now named Tye Fields whose handlers have taken the term "record-padding" to a new level. Tommy Morrison looked great until Ray Mercer, with his anvil chin and heavy fists, nearly decapitated him. We won't even talk about Shannon Briggs.

Don't think this is exclusive to heavyweights. The best recent example is junior welterweight Hector Camacho Jr., who impressed as an amateur and soon was an undefeated pro with a fat contract with America Presents. He fought one stiff after another, and before we knew it was the WBA's top contender. In his first fight against a guy who could hit back—Jesse James Leija—the kid crashed faster than a share of Enron stock.

There are others who accomplished more than most, but likely could have gone farther had they not been coddled to the degree that they were. Remember Mark Breland? He had perhaps the best one-two in the history of amateur boxing. Problem was, halfway into his pro career, that was still all he had. It was enough to twice get him the WBA title—he beat the mediocre duo of Harold Volbrecht and Seung Soo Lee—but when opposed by real pros, such as Marlon Starling and Aaron Davis, he wilted. Maybe it was because he was still riding that amateur reputation and not paying professional dues.

The notion of any prize fighter being pampered is silly, when you think about it. Compared to any other vocation, no boxer enjoys anything remotely resembling a pampered existence. The softest fighter is tougher than the toughest accountant who's ever lived. But we hold fighters to a different standard, and when we get the sense that they're getting a ride significantly easier than those that came before them, it's good for nobody except maybe their manager.

Most of the time, a promoter with deep pockets will entice a hot prospect with a sign-on bonus. Maybe it's a hundred thousand. Maybe it's a quarter million, more if he's a gold medal winner (remember those?). Be sure it's a hell of a lot more than the kid got who had 12 amateur fights and got to the semifinals in the local Diamond Gloves tournament, and turns pro to supplement what he gets trimming shrubs on the side of the highway.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO

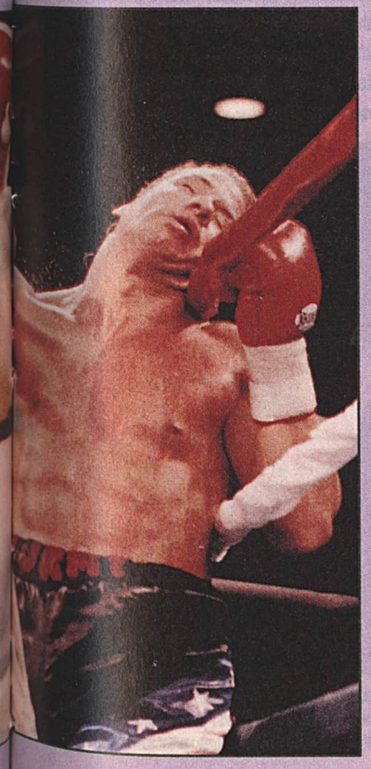


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

A familiar story repeats itself as untested prospects Gerry Cooney (left), Tommy Morrison (center), and Hector Camacho Jr. (right) suddenly discover that they never received the schooling they needed to handle serious competition. The big question is whether these high-profile disappointments were handled poorly, or never had the goods in the first place.

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Trainer Teddy Atlas is trying to rebuild Michael Grant, who looked like a future heavyweight champion until he climbed into the ring with Lennox Lewis and learned some hard truths by getting knocked out in two rounds. Was Grant pushed into a title fight too quickly?

The rub is, that signing bonus can do more harm than good.

"All that money up-front can take a lot of their hunger away," said Hall of Fame trainer Lou Duva. "The really hungry fighter is the one who's got a wife and four kids and is in debt."

Duva has a number of young prospects who are promoted by Duva Boxing—Dante Craig, Troy Ross, Shawn George, Oscar Diaz—and he considers none of them pampered.

"Our kids go away to camp and train three times a day. They're learning how to be fighters and how to be men. They're going to make it because they get away from their families and friends and they run in the morning and watch fight tapes and learn."

Duva has his own means of ensuring his fighters aren't coddled.

"When I started out looking for kids coming out of the Olympics and the amateurs, I looked for talent and I got a lot of good fighters that way—Rocky Lockridge, Johnny Bumphus. Later, when I saw what was happening with these 'investors' coming along and giving away the store to kids who hadn't proven whether they had talent, I decided character became number one and talent number two. Then the '84 Olympic class came along and I got Pernell Whitaker and Evander Holyfield and Meldrick Taylor. They had character and talent, and that's why they became world champions. When they have character and you sign them up and have to pay something up-front, it's okay because they have that character."

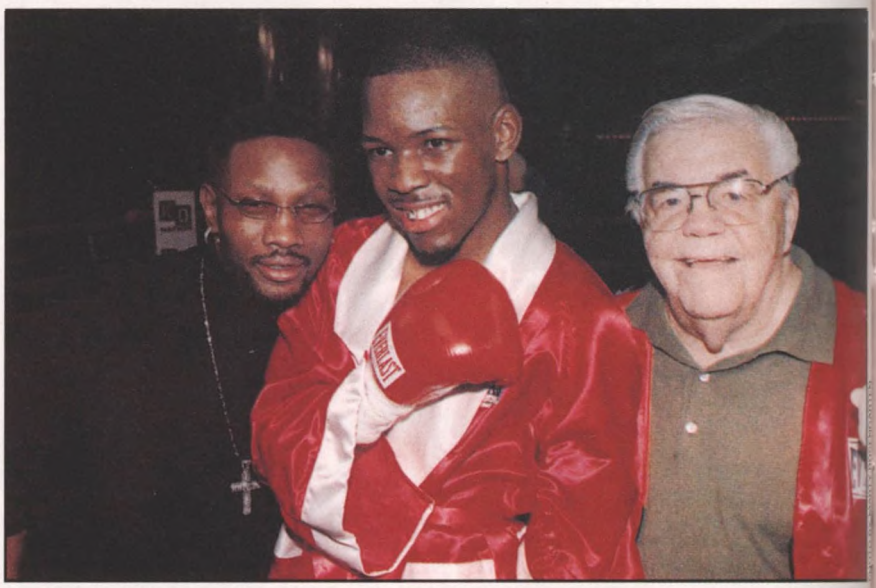
Duva is disheartened by what he sees as a change in the way prospects are signed and brought along.

"These investors, guys like [Shelly] Finkel and [Lou] DiBella, are paying these kids too much without anything being shown. All they know is the showbiz. It's all showbiz now. It used to be boxing; not anymore. All these guys are interested in is getting in the ring with their fighters with their suits on and being seen on TV.

"You see these kids today at the fights, and they pull up in a limo with a big entourage with gold all over. It used to be when a kid had a fight, he had a trainer, a second, and a manager. Now these kids have a boxing trainer, a conditioning coach, a breathing coach, a nutritionist, a flexibility coach. They got more coaches and therapists than they know what to do with. They aren't learning that they have to go to school and learn how to fight."

DiBella, who "advises" Olympians Clarence Vinson, Jerson Ravelo, Jermain Taylor, Jose Navarro, Brian Viloria, and Paolo Vidoz, predictably has a decidedly less gloomy outlook on how getting big money early on affects fighters.

"It depends on the kid. Anyone who is getting treatment outside the standard is considered 'pampered' and that would soften them, but it depends on how the individual handles it. In our group, I think they've handled themselves well, and they remember how little they've accomplished. That's one of the keys—to make them aware that the money they've made now is not money they're going to be able to retire on, and to make sure they know they haven't been really successful yet.



Lou Duva (right) wishes all prospects would pan out as well as Pernell Whitaker (left). Despite careful matchmaking, Duva protégé Dante Craig (center) has already suffered his first professional loss. When selecting whom he wants to work with, Duva says he gives character preference over talent.

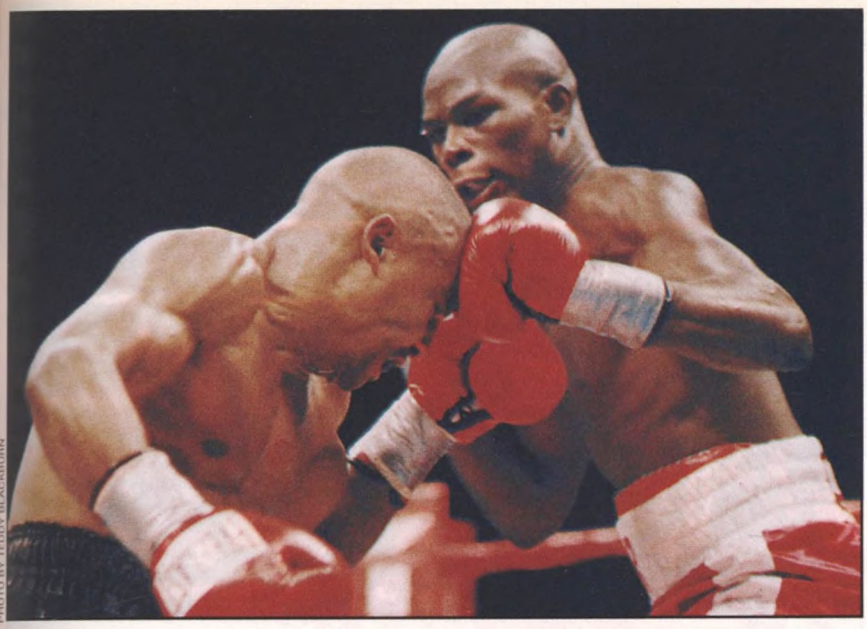


PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Undefeated middleweight Jermain Taylor, pictured en route to a TKO of David Hamilton, is one of the U.S. Olympians signed to a professional contract by Lou DiBella. Fighters aren't pampered when compared to other elite athletes says DiBella.

"I think every kid in this day and age that came out of the Olympics and signed with a major company is being pampered," DiBella continued. "But the money up front is an investment in the future. There is a cost to developing a young fighter. No matter how good an amateur career he had, he is not going to be able to immediately fight 10-rounders.

"Some guys are paid more than the norm in the industry during that process of development. It's very expensive and, yes, they're pampered, but the argument can be made, pampered compared to what? The standard in boxing for four, six, and eight-round fighters is terrible. They make nothing until they're fighting 10-rounders. So are they pampered? For fighters, probably yes. But not to the extent of a first-round draft pick, and an Olympic fighter is the boxing equivalent of a first-round draft pick."

DiBella makes a good point. As with most things, other sports are light years ahead of boxing in the way their most promising prospects are compensated when they turn pro. Does it make sense for a rookie player in the NBA—who, let's be honest, faces very little threat of serious injury—to get a $50-million contract, while a fighter with 300 amateur wins, a couple of Pan Am medals, and a dangerous future gets a check for a couple hundred grand? And then he has to listen to us moan about it?

The other side to all this, of course, is the question of competition. The bonus and the matchmaking together are what frequently equal a coddled fighter. Throwing money at a kid before he's ever fought a round without headgear is one thing. If he's matched hard and he learns, he pays every cent of the money back—frankly probably more than he should. But you know the drill. The prospect is matched easy, easy, and easy some more until the big money fight comes and then bang, end of prospect. It's almost unavoidable: If you lay out a lot of money on a fighter, you want to get some of it back. So you protect him.

And if you want to see real protection at work, don't watch *The Sopranos*. Catch an Audley Harrison fight. Not only has Britain's Olympic super heavyweight gold medal winner fought sporadically since turning pro, his competition has been abysmal, even by a prospect's standards. Think it might be because he was given a huge advance to pen his autobiography shortly after he won the medal? Or that a well-known sports-marketing firm picked him up, or that the BBC signed him to a two-year, 10-fight deal worth over a million pounds? Nah.

"You're cursed right out of the box because the people who have spent a lot of money on you will be less prone to give you the fights you need to develop," said trainer and ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* analyst Teddy Atlas. "They'll go the safe route to protect their investment. They're doing what's in their best interests, not what's in your best interests. Eventually, you have to step up, and often you're disappointed, and why wouldn't you be? It's like that commercial for motor oil where the guys says, 'You can pay now or you can pay later.'

"I think if amateurs who are turning pro go with people strictly for the money, it's very hurtful because they're not going to retire on that money. You still have to be successful. You need to get the essentials that you need to be successful. What they got up front is not going to make them comfortable for the rest of their lives. But what they didn't get is going to make

PHOTO BY PHIL COLE/GETTY IMAGES

Olympic super heavyweight gold medalist Audley Harrison has been heavily criticized for fighting bottom-of-the-barrel opposition. The Englishman stepped it up a bit in his most recent fight, stopping Julius Long in the second round. But it was far from a competitive bout.

them uncomfortable sooner or later."

So how does a manager—or really, a promoter for that matter—balance protecting his investment while at the same time developing his fighter? How do you get the kid experienced while still remembering how dangerous the business is? And if the kid was a great amateur, do you match him hard early on? Maybe so—if he handles it, you're a genius. But if he doesn't, you're a sadist.

Here's an example: Kostya Tszyu and Fernando Vargas were exceptional amateurs. Tszyu fought for and won the IBF junior welterweight title in his 14th fight. Vargas fought for and won the IBF junior middleweight belt in his 15th fight. Both still are top fighters, and few have questioned the tactic of moving them so quickly. David Reid, an Olympic gold medal winner, fought for and won the WBA super welterweight title in his 12th pro bout, but almost immediately disappointed as a champion. After Felix Trinidad brutalized him, all anybody could say was that America Presents rushed him, put him in over his head. The damned if you do, damned if you don't principle at work. How's it supposed to be done?

"It's not a science," Atlas said. "There's no formula. It depends on the fighter, and you have to know yours. You can pamper guys, but you have to treat them like fighters. You have to make demands, not unreasonable ones, but the same demands you would make of someone if you put them through college or trade school. You still have to put them in places where they can't lie to themselves and where they have to prove themselves. If you make compromises based on the fact that you gave them a lot of money, then you're wrong, because you wouldn't let a guy you didn't give money to get away with that. You'd say 'Hey, do you want to be a fighter or what?' You have to treat the guy you gave the money to the same way."

What's a manager to do? Both David Reid and Fernando Vargas won titles after 15 or fewer pro fights, but faltered soon afterward. Olympic gold medallist Reid has never been the same since he was flogged by Felix Trinidad (above), but Vargas has bounced back well from the TKO he suffered at "Tito's" hands (below). Were Reid and Vargas rushed?

The way DiBella sees it, the decision whether to pad your guy's record while you try to recoup your investment or throw him in the deep end to see if he swims is often made by outside forces. According to DiBella, there are fewer and fewer television dates available, and increasingly, those dates go to "sexy" fights between equally matched fighters. As a result, mismatches, or fights that are perceived to be mismatches, won't make it on the air. And TV fights are the ones that pay—both short and long term.

"My kids are going to be developed as real professional fighters," said DiBella. "They won't be protected until they're 30-0, in part because the networks won't let them fight bums for TV money. How do you balance it? You match them with guys who will help them grow, and you get them to the point where they are as good as they are going to get."

Inevitably, some of the prospects you see today are pampered and they will crash the moment they are forcefully opposed. Others are equally as coddled, but they will pass their tests and go on to become world champions, or maybe just respected professionals. As DiBella noted, "Ali, Leonard, Holyfield, they all got a lot of attention when they turned pro. It's not any different today than it was then."

It must mean then that it's up to the fighter; that coddling won't ruin a real prospect, it will only delay the ruination of the ordinary. If he's special, he'll succeed. If he's not, he won't. So let him be pampered. We'll get to the truth sooner or later. ■

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SUMMARY

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Jameel McCline W 10 Shannon Briggs
Clifford Etienne W 10 Terrance Lewis
Tim Witherspoon W 10 Ahmad Abdin
Marcelo Dominguez W 10 Pedro Daniel Franco
Robert Wiggins W 8 Earl Hayes
Gilbert Martinez W 10 Fernely Feliz
Dennis McKinney KO 1 Jerry Hill
Rob Calloway KO 3 Marcus Rhode
Anton Nel KO 10 Osborne Machimana
Michael Sprott KO 7 Pele Reid
Dominick Guinn KO 1 Frank Drexie James
Raphael Pedro W 6 Wade Lewis
Tye Fields KO 1 Jose Flores
Otis Tisdale W 8 Chester Hughes
Ruslan Chagaev W 8 Chris Isaac
Kevin Montiy KO 4 Quinton Ozgood
Joey Torres KO 2 Perry Williams
Malik Scott KO 1 Britton Thomas

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Manuel Siaca KO 2 Jose Cruz Rivas
Rocky Torres KO 11 Danny Santiago
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Prince Badi Ajamu W 6 Alton Rice
James Lubwama W 6 Randy Griffin
Chad Dawson KO 1 Gary Grant

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Danilo Haussler KO 4 Mustapha Illir
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Danny Green KO 3 Rhon Roberts
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Jerson Ravelo KO 3 Aaron Norwood
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Rhoshii Wells Tech. Draw 2 Johnny Rivera
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Rashid Matumla KO 6 Gary Murray
Kingsley Ikeke KO 5 Marlon Hayes
Rasheem Brown KO 1 Juan Rodriguez
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Robert Frazier W 8 Rodney Tatum
Emmett Linton KO 5 Rene Herrera
Simone Rotolo KO 7 Pasquale Perna
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Kermit Cintron KO 2 Patrick Thorns
Jose Celaya KO 7 Alejandro Jimenez
Carlos Quintana KO 6 Vincent Harris
Andre Eason W 6 John Trigg
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Dante Craig KO 2 Richard Lee Hall

Mohamad Abdulaev KO 3 Juan Rivera
Anthony Thompson KO 1 Fausto Alverquez

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Ubaldo Hernandez D 10 Juan Lopez
Lovemore Ndou KO 2 Jun Gorres
Michael Stewart W 10 John Bailey
Luis Alberto Santiago W 10 Mambea Bakari
Fred Cadena W 8 Marcos Badillo
Miguel Cotto KO 7 Juan Macias

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Steve Murray KO 5 Rozalin Nasibulin
Damian Fuller W 12 Mike Davis
Javier Jauregui KO 6 Miguel Casillas
Billy Irwin W 10 Chad Brisson
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Lemuel Nelson KO 2 John Hoffman
Regilio Tuur KO 2 Jimmy Joe Zeikle
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Sirimongkol Singmanassak KO 6
Christopher Zaludai
Yongsoo Choi KO 5 Petarun Worsuraphol
Arnulfo Castillo Tech. Win 6 Jesus Zatarin
Kevin Kelley KO 2 Raul Martin Franco
Carlos Navarro D 10 Omar Adorno
Randy Suico KO 6 Sungho Yuh
Nate Campbell KO 4 Jamie Torres

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Naseem Hamed W 12 Manuel Calvo
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William Abelyan W 10 Jesus Salud
William Abelyan KO 2 Alvin Brown
Jorge Eliecer Julio W 10 Daryl Pinckney
Juan Carlos Ramirez W 10 Enrique Jupiter
Jose Quintana W 10 Cesar Soto
Akihiko Nago Tech. Win 5
Osvaldo Guerrero
Steve Conway W 8 Steve Robinson
Takashi Koshimoto W 12 Toshikage Kimura

PHOTO BY BRIAN CANNON/DKP

Junior flyweights Alex Sanchez and Jose Victor Burges battle to a draw

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Hino Kiatdhohbohubol
Humberto Soto W 10 Mark Burse
Rocky Juarez KO 5 Javier Ortiz

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Jaime Barcelona
Hector Julia Avila KO 1 Santiago Matos
Shigeru Nakazato KO 3 Yongin Cho
Michael Alldis KO 8 Vuyani Phulo
Vuyani Phulo D 12 Bonele Joyi
Sod Looknongyangtoy W 12 Andy Alagenio
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Johnny Armour W 12 Francis Ampofo
Dechdamrong Muangsurin W 12
Alvin Felicida

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Meiji CP Gym KO 4 Kaldybek Zhailaouv
Sot Sorveerapol Skinduregym W 12
Diosdado Gabi
Edicson Torres KO 9 Felix Bracho
Kazuyoshi Niki KO 1 Nico Thomas
Jose Nieves KO 1 Fidencio Reyes
Jose Navarro W 8 Julio Cesar Oyuela

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Wandee Chor Chareon W 6 Ramil Anito
Hussein Hussein W 8 Sande Kizito
Gabriel Elizondo KO 7 Manny Melchor
Gabula Vabaza KO 5 Loyiso Ngxabazi
Masaki Nakanuma W 10 Takefumi Sakata
Kazuo Okada W 10 Takahiro Uomori
Lorenzo Parra KO 3 Vidal Estrada
Ivan Calderon W 4 Carlos Rey Lopez
Brian Viloria KO 1 Sandro Oviedo

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Alex Sanchez D 12 Jose Victor Burgos
Fahlan Sakkreerin W 12 Julio Dela Basez
Agustin Luna W 10 Jesus Martinez
Genki Ohnaka W 10 Hiroshi Matsumoto
Vicky Tahumil W 12 Angky Angkota

STRAWWEIGHTS

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Isaac Bustos KO 1 Fernando Luna
Sithembile Kibiti KO 1 Cecil Ndamase

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PRESENTS

The RING

FIGHTER of the MONTH

Officially, Floyd Mayweather won a unanimous decision over Jose Luis Castillo to claim the lightweight title. Maybe you agree with that decision; several journalists and some fans have spoken up and said that they scored in favor of Mayweather. Probably, though, you don't agree with that decision, since it seems a great majority of fans felt Castillo should have gotten the nod. But either way, no matter who you thought won, you must say this: Castillo fought brilliantly, and if he didn't out-and-out beat "Pretty Boy," he at least gave him a much tougher fight than anyone else ever has and proved that he is an elite boxer worthy of pound-for-pound consideration.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Castillo couldn't match Mayweather's hand speed, but he was able to take his punch with apparent ease, and thus didn't hesitate to apply the pressure necessary to slow down his slick opponent. Castillo hit Mayweather more than anyone has before, and his bodywork, which the judges obviously didn't value much, was tremendous. But Castillo hasn't come as far as he has just with toughness and power. He's also a highly skilled boxer with deft defense and appreciable punch variety. And each time he fights, his two performances against Stevie Johnston in 2000 look less like a case of Johnston slipping and more like a case of Castillo being one of the 10 or 12 best fighters in the world.

• • • •

Jose Luis Castillo

RINGSIDE REPORTS

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Calzaghe catches Brewer with a left

Joe Calzaghe W 12 Charles Brewer

Cardiff, Wales: This fight, said Brewer's promoter, J Russell Peltz, would identify the best super middleweight in the world. Brewer, 167¾, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, twice lost disputed decisions to IBF champion Sven Ottke, the only other claimant to the top slot in the division. A convincing victory by Calzaghe, 167¾, would settle the issue. The Welshman did not disappoint.

Some 7,000 impassioned fans at the Cardiff International Arena witnessed a real slugfest—not on the scale of the Marvelous Marvin Hagler-Tommy Hearns classic Brewer had promised, but certainly a fight of relentless commitment. The two men swapped blows with brutal intent, and Calzaghe emerged with genuine credit, even from Brewer who was reluctant to acknowledge his deep respect for his opponent's display. When he had asked questions of the 30-year-old, Calzaghe responded strongly, most noticeably near the end of the seventh round when the Philadelphian landed a hard right to the jaw, his best punch of the fight. But the clear majority of the rounds were Calzaghe's, and promoter Frank Warren said afterward that he would like to lure world middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins to the higher weight to establish Calzaghe as a superstar in the United States.

"Joe is the best fighter at super middleweight in the world. He's proved that beyond a shadow of a doubt," said Warren. "Roy Jones does not appear to be interested in fighting Joe, who I firmly believe would win. So Hopkins and Joe is a fight I would love to put on and I've been speaking to [Hopkins' promoter] Don King about it."

Brewer, 32, declared Calzaghe would beat his fellow Philadelphian. He shipped enough blows from Calzaghe to know. In the opening round they set the tone, standing toe-to-toe and trading punches that were obviously not intended to be rangefinders. A right and a left from the southpaw Calzaghe staggered Brewer, who landed a strong right in reply that Calzaghe merely shrugged off.

In the second, third, and fourth rounds, the Welshman increased his advantage. But he encountered a foe that refused to yield under the avalanche of blows raining down on him. In each of these rounds, the American was rocked. But having survived the storm, he revived himself in the sixth and seventh rounds and showed real signs of being able to turn the fight on its head. But Calzaghe's chin is rock solid, and even the right hand he sustained at the end of the seventh, which would have finished many men, barely caused him to miss a beat—though the sound of the bell was probably a welcome intervention.

A pact seemed to be agreed upon from the ninth round on to let up on the frightening pace at which they had fought the first half of the bout. Calzaghe stayed in control, but Brewer, 37-9 (26), remained a danger until the final bell. The result, though, was not in doubt.

Robin Dolpierre (France) scored 118-111, Chuck Giampa (USA) 119-109, and Roy Francis (England) 117-112, all for Calzaghe. THE RING card read 118-112 for Calzaghe. The referee was Mark Nelson (USA).

"That was hard. I really had to dig deep, but I'm a warrior," said Calzaghe, 33-0 (27). "I proved I can take a shot and I showed my champion's heart. I'd love to fight Bernard Hopkins and I know I'd take him out. We'll see if he wants to respond to the challenge."

Television: Showtime
Promoter: Frank Warren
(4-20-02)
Brian Doogan

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam KO 1 Daisuke Naito

Khonkaen, Thailand: Hard-punching WBC flyweight titlist Pongsaklek, 112, Thailand, registered the quickest kayo defense in flyweight history, as he exploded with a vicious southpaw left to the chin of previously unbeaten Japanese Naito, 112, blasting him out in just 34 seconds of the opening session.

The 27-year-old Naito, 19-1-2 (14), initiated the action from the start, bringing a furious opening attack to the titleholder, who kept cool and covered himself up well. Suddenly, Pongsaklek, 24, making his fourth defense, landed a devastating left to the face of the challenger, flattening him for the 10-count—and beyond.

The previous record was held by Frenchman Emile "Spider" Pladner when he dismantled Frankie Genaro to capture the NBA flyweight belt 58 seconds into the opening canto on March 2, 1929. Pongsaklek, 44-2 (25), deserves a great deal of credit for breaking this record, but also owes thanks to Naito's reckless and careless strategy.

(4-19-02)
Joe Koizumi

Jameel McCline W 10 Shannon Briggs

New York, New York: It wasn't exactly a step backward, but it wasn't the showcase for McCline that many expected. Instead, it was one of those sobering fights where preconceived notions got scrambled enough that a reassessment of both fighters is warranted.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

McCline was cautious and defensive, but still did enough to outpoint Briggs

Briggs, with his history of losing the big ones, had seen his stock slip even lower when journeyman Sedreck Fields decisoned him in 2000. And coming into the McCline fight at The Theater at Madison Square Garden at a whopping 268¼ pounds seemed to confirm the lack of commitment that has been the bane of his career.

But the jittery manner in which McCline answered the opening bell seemed to indicate that he was not as convinced of the supposed foregone conclusion as most of us on the other side of the ropes. And when Brooklyn-based Briggs unloaded some heavy shots in the opening moments of the bout, the reason for McCline's caution became clear: Briggs was armed, dangerous, and had no intention of rolling over for the latest heavyweight flavor of the moment.

Nothing much happened in the second, but a thudding left hook to the head by Briggs early in the third seemed to discourage McCline, 264, from getting too adventurous. Still, the Port Jefferson, New York, contender stiffened his jab in the fourth, and successfully outboxed an aggressive Briggs in the fifth.

His confidence growing, McCline put his left hook behind a straight right in the sixth, catching Briggs clean and sending him down on his back. Briggs almost did a reverse summersault before coming to a halt, but quickly scrambled back to his feet well inside of referee Mike Ortega's count.

Briggs didn't wait for McCline to go for the finish. He counter-attacked with a right to the jaw that quickly curtailed any thoughts McCline might have had about going for broke. Briggs put across a hard left hook before the bell, and although the knockdown gave McCline a two-point edge for the round, Briggs' two big punches might have hurt more than McCline's.

They'd both expended a lot of energy in the sixth, and McCline's better conditioning paid off the last four rounds. He ignored Briggs' verbal taunts to stand and fight, used his legs, and picked his spots to punch judiciously. McCline landed a pair of good rights in the ninth, one early, the other late. He also put together a couple of combinations in the 10th, but Briggs, although a bit gassed, wasn't going anywhere.

The triple scores of 99-90 handed in by American judges Tom Kaczmarek, Julie Lederman, and Steve Weisfeld seemed a tad generous (THE RING favored McCline by 98-92), but nobody could argue with the call.

"Jameel is a strong guy, and he moves great for a guy that big," said Briggs, 36-4-1 (30). "I can see him definitely making a lot of noise in the heavyweight division."

Briggs, who admitted to being 30 pounds overweight, might also make some noise if he rededicates himself. He's only 30 years old, hasn't taken too many beatings, and obviously punches hard enough to do damage.

"Shannon hurt me maybe six or seven times," said McCline after running his record to 28-2-3 (16).

The fight showed that the 31-year-old McCline, with scant amateur experience, still is very much a work in progress. But he's also an intelligent individual who understands the wisdom of not trying to be something he isn't.

"Discipline and intelligence are my major assets," he said. "But I have been gifted with the ability to evolve."

It will be interesting to see how far.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Cedric Kushner

(4-27-02)

Nigel Collins

Johnny Bredahl KO 9 Eidy Moya

Copenhagen, Denmark: No Danish fighter had ever laid claim to a major title before Bredahl, 118, took full advantage of a surprisingly weak Moya, 118, to win the WBA bantamweight title at the Falkonercenter. It was the Venezuelan's first defense of the crown he won in a vacant-title fight against Adan Vargas in Texas last October.

The weigh-in was deeply controversial. Moya was a quarter-pound overweight and had to step off the scales, sweat off the excess, and return 15 minutes later to make the limit. Bredahl was bang on the button when he stepped on the scales—not the official set, but a second set brought in because the first set was seemingly damaged. However, Moya's cutman, Manny Siaca, alleged that Bredahl was over the limit and the commission was protecting the local fighter.

"Somebody played with the scales," explained Bredahl. "That's why they were changed. He is just scared."

Moya blasted back: "They told me the first scales were official, then suddenly they were changed. It will not affect me at all. I will kill him tomorrow."

But when the time came, Moya was impotent after the opening round and looked like he had weakened himself making the weight. The 33-year-old Bredahl, who had lost previous title challenges against Wayne McCullough and Paulie Ayala, used his jab to brilliant effect. It was rarely out of the South American title-

holder's face whenever he tried to mount an attack. Overhand rights and solid right uppercuts augmented Bredahl's consummate work with his left hand, and by the end of the third round he had clearly established his superiority.

An increasingly frustrated and wearisome Moya, 27, lost his way entirely in the middle rounds, and by the ninth Bredahl was ready to move in and make his victory emphatic. Two lefts and a straight right put Moya, 15-2 (8), down, and he stayed on the floor for five anxious minutes before requiring another five minutes on his stool before he could leave the ring.

"I knew I was going to win," said a delighted Bredahl, 52-2 (26). "I have learned from my previous losses to McCullough and Ayala and I wasn't going to let this opportunity slip me by. I stuck to my game plan and I simply felt indestructible in there. I had terrific preparation with my trainer, Freddie Roach, and I hope to go on from here and establish myself as a worthy champion."

The referee was Armando Garcia (USA).

Promoter: Mogens Palle

(4-19-02)

Brian Doogan

David Tua KO 9 Fres Oquendo

Chester, West Virginia: Oquendo's first mistake was putting his unbeaten record on the line against Tua, a fighter who has proven to be quite beatable, but only against opponents with certain traits. You either need to have a great chin (as Ike Ibeabuchi did when he took Tua's best shots for 12 rounds), or a nearly unhittable chin (as Chris Byrd, using his radar reflexes, and Lennox Lewis, using his height, reach, and caution, both displayed in posting decision wins over "The Tuaman"). Oquendo, though a skilled, somewhat mobile, decent-hitting heavyweight, was taking a major risk against Tua, because he has both a mediocre chin—remember how badly he was wobbled by blown-up cruiserweight Ramon Garbey?—and an occasionally sloppy defense. The result was classic Tua: Do very little for several rounds, fall way behind in the scoring, then find an opening late and score a dramatic knockout.

Tua, 243, New Zealand, knew this 12-rounder at the Mountaineer Raceway Park was a must-win for him, but he didn't particularly fight like it for most of the first eight rounds. After missing with a few wild left hooks in the first minute of the fight, Tua, 29, settled into his usual approach, which includes looking mean, snorting hard, and lumbering forward—everything except punching. To his credit Oquendo, 229¾, Chicago, Illinois, flashed a variety of offensive tools, pumping the jab consistently, firing a couple of quick combos per round, and scoring with several clean uppercuts when his shorter opponent got close. Tua stepped up the pressure a bit in the third and the fifth, but lost every other round convincingly, and, as Oquendo's confidence grew, the Samoan slugger knew he needed a one-punch turnaround by the time the bell sounded to begin the ninth.

He found it when he backed Oquendo to the ropes and, with the Puerto Rican primarily occupied with looking out for Tua's dreaded left hook, landed a long overhand right. Oquendo wobbled and tried to grab, but Tua pounced. A left to the body, a hook to the head, and a right to the jaw all landed, and soon Oquendo, 29, was trapped in a corner. A three-punch flurry only grazed Oquendo, but Tua then scored with a clean hook and a booming overhand right that convinced referee Dave Johnson (USA) to jump in at 1:54 of the ninth. If the stoppage seemed a tad early to some at the moment Johnson intervened, it became clear that it was well-timed when Oquendo, 22-1 (13), was seen staggering on Jell-O legs until his cornermen could get into the ring and steady him.

"I'd like to thank Mr. Oquendo for giving me this opportunity," said Tua, 40-3 (35), afterward. Oquendo's management obviously had made a mistake, taking a fight in which the reward was not worth the risk, and giving Tua the opportunity he needed to get back into the title picture. But Tua certainly hasn't earned another title shot yet, and fortunately, there are enough guys in line ahead of him that he'll need a couple more wins like this before he gets another crack at the gold.

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Cedric Kushner Promotions

(4-13-02)

Harry Simon W 12 Armand Krajnc

Copenhagen, Denmark: Bernard Hopkins may be the undisputed ruler of the world's middleweights, but Simon, 158¾, Namibia, is determined to challenge the Philadelphian's supremacy. He may be capable, too, judging by his comprehensive unanimous decision victory over Kranjc, 159½, Sweden. Hopkins is a cut above Kranjc, but so was Simon.

A convivial, gregarious character who also happens to be the Namibian government's minister for sport, the 29-year-old Simon's harsh upbringing in which food and water could never be taken for granted as every-day conveniences has infused a deep desire that has provided the basis for his 23-0 (17) record in the ring. He is a highly skilled practitioner, too, and, though he has just stepped up from junior middleweight, he is genuinely confident he can handle Hopkins.

"That's the fight I want. I know I can beat him, and that's not just big talk. I have the tools to back it up," he said. "I respect him for the great champion he has been in the middleweight division for years, but I believe his

Tua's power bails him out again

time is coming to an end and I will bring his reign to an end."

Felix Trinidad thought he would prevail over Hopkins, too, but the reality was painful for the proud Puerto Rican. Kranjc, 28, endured similar suffering in front of 3,000 of his supporters against Simon. That he made it to the final bell was testament to his strong will and character. Long before his torment was over, his fate had been determined, but, courageously, he battled on in the forlorn hope of changing the inevitable.

The power differential made this impossible. Over the opening few rounds, Kranjc, 26-1 (19), was competitive, more technically able than given credit for and psyched up to deliver the performance he knew he would need. Simon went about his job coolly, assured in his mind that he would assume control soon enough. By the middle rounds, his sharp, punishing combination punches had established a clear lead on the scorecards, and Kranjc's ambition began to wane—though his commitment never did. That he managed to stay on his feet was no shabby achievement considering the storm he was caught up in. Occasionally, too, he served a reminder to Simon that he was not in the business of giving up on himself, but the better blows came from the African. There was no anxiety that the decision would be anything other than overwhelming in his favor. The scores were 116-112 from both Frank Cairo (USA) and Manuel Maritzalar (Spain), and 116-113 from Andre Van Grootenbruel (Belgium).

"He was tough and fought a good fight, but I showed I am a force to be reckoned with at middleweight now and I'm looking to encounter the top guys in this division," Simon said.

Promoter Frank Warren said: "Harry's a fighter with a very bright future, and I certainly want to get him in some big fights. Felix Trinidad's on the way back and that would be a good fight, and, of course, there's Bernard Hopkins, who's deciding what he wants to do. Well, Harry's here and he's willing to fight anybody and soon he'll be the top man at middleweight, I'm sure."

Promoter: Sports Network

(4-6-02)

Brian Doogan

Veerapol Sahaprom W 12 Julio Coronel

Nonthaburi, Thailand: WBC bantam titlist Veerapol kept his belt for the ninth time as he dropped Colombian Coronel in the second and whipped him with accurate shots to pound out a unanimous decision over 12 rounds. The fight took place on the Rama 5th Bridge under rain, which made the canvas very slippery. But Veerapol kept his footing long enough to win by scores of 117-110 from Sergio Silvi (Italy), 117-109 from Takeaki Kanaya (Japan), and 118-109 from Paolo Scarso (Italy).

Veeraphol, a 33-year-old veteran with plenty of Muay-Thai (traditional Thai kickboxing) titles under his belt, proved too ringwise for his game opponent, who had upset then-world-rated Vernie Torres by a sixth-round knockout last September.

Coronel got off to a good start and took the opening round. But Veerapol caught him with a well-timed left hook in the second, knocking him to the deck.

Veerapol was in command most of the way after that, scoring with more accurate punches and piling up points. The Colombian took back the initiative only in the fifth and seventh, when he let loose and threw more punches than the titlist. Midway through the seventh, Veerapol sustained a cut over the left eye due to a clash of heads, so Coronel was penalized a point by Korean referee David Chung in accordance with the WBC rules.

Veerapol celebrates another successful title defense

The Thailander dominated the contest from the ninth session on, as he connected with precise shots. Coronel fought well, but Veerapol, 37-1-1 (26), whose reign started in December 1998, showed his superiority in jabbing and counterpunching, though it was not his best performance. The 34-year-old Coronel, 21-17-1 (16), displayed his gameness and fighting spirit and won the praise of the Thai crowd despite his defeat.

(5-1-02)

Joe Koizumi

Yodsanan Nanthachai W 12 Lakva Sim

Nakornratchasima, Thailand: Hard-punching Thai southpaw Yodsanan, 130, impressively acquired the vacant WBA 130-pound belt as he swapped hot punches with ex-titleholder Sim, 130, Mongolia, all the way and pounded out a unanimous decision over 12 heats. The title became vacant when Acelino Freitas received the WBA's "super champ" designation by beating Joel Casamayor in January '02.

The scores were fairly wide in favor of the sturdy Thailander, though the fight was highly competitive throughout. Michael Lee (Korea) had it 116-112, Takeshi Shimakawa (Japan) saw it 119-110, and Larsen Oumghar (Holland) scored 120-109. The referee was Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa).

Yodsanan was in command in the first four rounds with fresher, faster combinations. But Sim, three years his senior at 30, dominated the fifth through seventh rounds with his busy attack at close quarters.

They exchanged punches toe-to-toe in the center of the ring, but

Yodsanan, 36-2-1 (33), confirmed his triumph by dominating the eighth, ninth, and 11th sessions. The winner looked more powerful than the highly regarded Sim, 16-3-1 (13), throwing more effective punches in combination to the face and breadbasket. Afterward, Thai people proclaimed it the "Fight Of The Year" thus far.

Promoter: Songchai Promotions.

(4-13-02)

Joe Koizumi

Stevie Johnston W 12 Alejandro Gonzalez

Las Vegas, Nevada: Johnston spent eight days in a Colorado jail for failure to pay child support only weeks before a pivotal fight in his career with "Cobrita" Gonzalez. Johnston remained in the lightweight title picture with a majority decision victory at the MGM Grand Garden over the Mexican, who failed to mount enough offense to give the judges a reason to score the fight for him. Carol Castellano (USA) scored it 116-113 for Johnston, while Dave Moretti (USA) had it 116-112. Paul Smith (USA) scored the bout a draw at 114-114, the same as THE RING's card.

Johnston's key weapon throughout the night was a jab that he repeatedly kept sticking in Gonzalez' face. Gonzalez, 135, pressed the action, but didn't throw punches when he had the opportunity. He frequently had Johnston, 133½, in position to be hit, but wasn't able to capitalize.

"I should have done more and I could have done more," Gonzalez said. "When you get down to it, it comes on me. I should have thrown more punches."

Johnston wasn't sure, though, when the final bell rang, how the decision would go. He didn't celebrate in anticipation of a win and was hardly emotional after a victory he absolutely had to have. He knew that Gonzalez was pressing the fight and that judges in Nevada have a propensity for rewarding aggression.

"I thought they were going to give it to him," Johnson said. "That's the way my life has been going. If they had given it to him, it sure wouldn't have surprised me."

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Southpaw Johnston's jab paves the way to victory over Gonzalez

Neither fighter was knocked down and neither was seriously hurt in a fight that prompted more than a few catcalls from the crowd of 6,920.

Gonzalez, 28, landed a left in the second that seemed to bother Johnston, but when Gonzalez tried to pick up the pace, Johnston fought back hard and landed several shots that caused Gonzalez to become wary. Johnston did his best work early in the fight, while Gonzalez, 48-5-1 (33), came on in the second half of the fight. It was not enough, though, as Johnson, 29, raised his record to 34-2-1 (16).

Promoter Bob Arum of Top Rank had promised the winner a shot at lightweight champion Floyd Mayweather, but it's not going to happen just yet. First, Johnston will have to fight another eliminator, against dangerous Juan Lazcano, and, if victorious, he'll then become the WBC mandatory to the Mayweather-Jose Luis Castillo II winner.

Television: HBO

(4-20-02)

Kevin Iole ■

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New Face

(Continued from page 20)

have a lot of knuckleheads in the world, and it doesn't matter what age they are. You don't forget that stuff. I had no problem letting things out. It was so frustrating. I used to fight a lot over Jamel. His legs sometimes would get so sore, he couldn't move. He still cries and starts to sweat. Sometimes, it makes me cry.

"That's how I got the motivation to fight, off of Jamel. But I was an angry kid. I've dealt with it. It wasn't easy, walking all day. I'd watch my mother get up every morning looking for a job. She couldn't find steady work because of Jamel's condition. But this is my time now. This is my time to provide for my family and help them get the things they've always wanted. I was always the one sacrificing, now everyone is centered on me and what I'm trying to do."

Like becoming world heavyweight champion by the time he's 25. Scott certainly has the right people surrounding him, from manager Shelly Finkel to trainer Harold "Shadow" Knight. The 6'4", 220-pound Scott even has a special fan in heavyweight champ Lennox Lewis, which is ironic, considering Scott is managed by Finkel, who also manages Mike Tyson.

Scott worked out with Lewis as the champ prepared for his showdown with Tyson on June 8 in Memphis, Tennessee, at Lewis' Pocono, Pennsylvania, hideaway.

"The experience of working out around Lennox Lewis is something you can't put into words," said Knight, who works Lewis' corner with trainer Emanuel Steward. "Champions are made by being around other champions. Jameel McCline and Lennox is a classic example. McCline always says he learned so much sparring with Lennox. Malik will watch Lennox when he shadowboxes, and when he runs. Lennox still runs hard, still shadowboxes hard.

"One day, Malik said to me, 'He does these things, and he's champion.' I told Malik, 'That's right, that's why he's still heavyweight champ.' But Lennox has taken a real liking to the kid. Lennox said to me before Malik's fight against Britton Thomas, 'Shadow, you and Malik can't come back to camp if you lose.' Lennox has worked wonders with Malik. We couldn't be in a better position to let this experience rub off on Malik."

Knight has also played a big role in Scott's progression. Knight started training Scott for his last three fights, taking over for Scott's previous trainer, Anthony Jacobs. It was a hard decision for Scott to make, but he believed that it was time to step to another level and that tapping someone with world championship experience, like Knight, would advance his career.

Dedication was one thing, however, that Knight needed to see from Scott. The two met in early-December 2001, after Lewis regained the heavyweight title from Hasim Rahman. Knight quickly found out how committed Scott was in their first week together. Scott came up to Plainfield, New Jersey, from his Philly home and began morning runs with Knight. Well, running was not exactly what Scott was doing.

"More like trotting," Knight said, laughing. "We ran together and I just felt Malik wasn't giving me his all. I didn't want to throw it all at the kid at once. But he had to start running, not jogging."

Then came the test. One morning, Knight told Scott to run without him, and they'll meet up together later at the gym.

"So I went down and drove slowly along the side streets to see if Malik was doing what I told him to do," Knight recalled. "I've had my career, I've had my fun. It's Malik's time, and I wanted to see how badly he wanted it. That morning I found out."

There running—not jogging—was Scott.

In the ring, Knight wanted to address a few flaws he noticed, like Scott's defense and balance. Scott had a tendency to bring his feet close together, negating the leverage behind his punches. Scott also needed schooling on positioning. He'd make an opponent miss, but was unable to counter because to he was too far away from his foe. Scott has a very good jab, but seldom used it. Consequently, he was open to get hit with a shot that broke up his rhythm.

"As far as Malik's ability, he stands 6'4", and he's a boxer-puncher," Knight said. "But he came out as a banger, Philly style. I thought, *No way*. I thought Malik should have been using his reach and athleticism. You're always going to keep your power. The kid can punch with his right hand. I wanted him to use his speed and his jab, but to make it that much easier, using his right hand and his hook. I didn't change his style, I just added to what he already knows.

"The kid knows how to fight. You can't change fighters. They have to be willing to change. People are going to be used to doing certain things all of the time. His balance and his defense were two areas I felt I had to work on. The kid can throw any combination in the book, but he wasn't confident he could do it. It was just a matter of believing in himself. It wasn't so much him trying new things. It was a matter of bringing things out in him that I already saw, which he didn't see in himself. He's been doing things he didn't think he was capable of doing."

Scott openly admits there was a time when he had doubts about his ability. His biggest concern was his power.

"Sure, I didn't believe in my ability at one time," Scott said. "I used to wonder if I had the crack to make these heavyweights feel me. I was a small heavyweight, and I wanted to be felt. There were times when I was fighting guys I knew I wouldn't have to put my foot to the metal to beat. I'd beat them with the jab. You beat a guy with a jab, that's not appreciated. The bottom line is, I don't think there is a heavyweight boxer that can do the things that I can do in the gym right now. The thing about me is that I need more experience."

Scott's 2002 campaign has certainly raised a few eyebrows. He's been more active the first four months of the year than at any time in his career. His most impressive victory to date was a first-round knockout of Thomas, in Uncasville, Connecticut, on April 27. It came on the televised undercard of the Cliff Etienne-Terrance Lewis *Showtime Championship Boxing* broadcast. Seated at ringside was Jamel, cheering for his brother.

Scott hopes and prays that the next long walk he and Jamel take together won't involve the memory of any mocking gestures in North Philly, but will instead be filled with the blaring sound of music that usually accompanies the entrance of a world heavyweight champion. ■

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ALPHABET RATINGS

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS
(Ratings as of April 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: John Ruiz (USA)
1. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
2. Evander Holyfield (USA)
3. Vitaly Klitschko (UKR)
4. Mike Tyson (USA)
5. Nicolay Valouev (RUS)
6. Oliver McCall (USA)
7. Larry Donald (USA)
8. Jameel McCline (USA)
9. Hasim Rahman (USA)
10. David Tua (NZ)
11. Danny Williams (GB)
12. Lamon Brewster (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
1. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
2. James Toney (USA)
3. Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
4. Virgil Hill (USA)
5. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
6. O'Neil Bell (USA)
7. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
8. Luis Pineda (PAN)
9. Dale Brown (CAN)
10. Valery Brudov (RUS)
11. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
12. Louis Azille (DR)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Super Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
Champ: Bruno Girard (FRA)
1. Lou Del Valle (USA)
2. Antonio Tarver (USA)
3. Clinton Woods (GB)
4. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
5. David Telesco (USA)
6. Mads Larsen (DEN)
7. Reggie Johnson (USA)
8. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
9. Montell Griffin (USA)
10. Danny Santiago (PR)
11. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)
12. Robert Koon (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Byron Mitchell (USA)
1. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
2. Thomas Tate (USA)
3. David Starie (GB)
4. Antwun Echols (USA)
5. Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)
6. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
7. Danilo Haussler (GER)
8. Markus Beyer (GER)
9. Omar Sheika (USA)
10. Julio Cesar Green (DR)
11. Manuel Siaca (PR)
12. Zafarou Ballogou (TOG)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Super Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: William Joppy (USA)
1. Felix Trinidad (PR)
2. Howard Eastman (GB)
3. Keith Holmes (USA)
4. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
5. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
6. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
7. Bert Schenk (GER)
8. Darren Obah (AUSTRL)
9. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
10. Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)
11. David Reid (USA)
12. Erland Betare (FRA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Fernando Vargas (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
4. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
5. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
6. Angel Hernandez (USA)
7. Travis Simms (USA)
8. Michael Rask (DEN)
9. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
10. Jose Flores (MEX)
11. Bronco McKart (USA)
12. Steve Roberts (GB)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (CR)
1. Vacant
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Michael Trabant (GERE)
4. Jose Rivera (USA)
5. Andrew Lewis (GUY)
6. Golden Johnson (USA)
7. Vincent Phillips (USA)
8. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
9. Danny Perez (USA)
10. Frederic Klose (FRA)
11. Jeffrey Hill (USA)
12. Hiroyuki Maeda (JAP)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Super Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Randall Bailey (USA)
2. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
3. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
4. Khalid Rahilou (FRA)
5. Ricky Hatton (GB)
6. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
7. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA)
8. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
9. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
10. Omar Weis (ARG)
11. Ben Tackie (USA)
12. Henry Bruseles (PR)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Leonard Dorin (CAN)
1. Raul Balbi (ARG)
2. Miguel Callist (PAN)
3. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
4. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
5. Juan Lazcano (USA)
6. Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)
7. Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)
8. Angel Manfredy (USA)
9. Steve Johnston (USA)
10. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
11. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)
12. Colin Dunne (GB)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Super Champ: Acelino Freitas (BRA)
Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
1. Joel Casanayor (CUB)
2. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
3. Phillip Ndou (SA)
4. Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)
5. Lakva Sim (MON)
6. Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)
7. Michael Gomez (GB)
8. Silvano Usini (ITA)
9. Carlos Hernandez (SAL)
10. Jesus Chavez (MEX)
11. Daniel Attah (NIG)
12. Nate Campbell (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Derrick Gainer (USA)
1. Daniel Seda (PR)
2. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
3. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
4. Naseem Hamed (GB)
5. Injin Chi (KOR)
6. Lewis Woods (US)
7. Victor Polo (COL)
8. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
9. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
10. Chris John (IND)
11. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
12. Oscar Leon (COL)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
1. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
2. Israel Vasquez (MEX)
3. Yober Ortega (VEN)
4. Paulie Ayala (USA)
5. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
6. Osamu Sato (JAP)
7. Johnny Armour (GB)
8. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
9. Michael Brodie (GB)
10. Enrique Sanchez (MEX)
11. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
12. Oscar Larios (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
1. Leo Gamez (VEN)
2. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
3. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
4. Spend Abazi (DEN)
5. Eidy Moya (VEN)
6. Adan Vargas (MEX)
7. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
8. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
9. Genaro Garcia (USA)
10. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
11. Diego Morales (MEX)
12. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Mbwana Matumla (TNZ)
3. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
4. Sornpichai Pisnurachank (THAI)
5. Celes Kobayashi (JAP)
6. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
7. Jesus Rojas (VEN)
8. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
9. Luis Bolanos (COL)
10. Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)
11. Takuya Kiya (JAP)
12. Meiji C.P. Gym (THAI)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Morel (USA)
1. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
2. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
3. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
4. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
5. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
6. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
7. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
8. Damaen Kelly (GB)
9. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
10. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
11. Jose Carita Lopez (PR)
12. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
3. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
4. Deeden Kengkarun (THAI)
5. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
6. Masibulele Makepula (SA)
7. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
8. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
9. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
10. Ratanapol Vorapin (THAI)
11. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
12. Tatsuo Kayashida (JAP)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS
Champ: Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
1. Noel Arambulet (VEN)
2. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
3. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
4. Daniel Reyes (COL)
5. Khulile Mamaykeba (SA)
6. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
7. Alex Sanchez (PR)
8. Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)
9. Reynaldo Frutos (PAN)
10. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
11. Juan Landaeta (VEN)
12. Miguel Barrera (COL)

WBC RATINGS
(Ratings as of May 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Mike Tyson (USA)
2. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
3. Hasim Rahman (USA)
4. Evander Holyfield (USA)
5. Oliver McCall (USA)
6. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
7. David Tua (NZ)
8. Fres Oquendo (USA)
9. Chris Byrd (USA)
10. Jameel McCline (USA)
11. Danny Williams (GB)
12. Clifford Etienne (USA)
13. Ray Mercer (USA)
14. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
15. Lamon Brewster (USA)
16. Tim Witherspoon (USA)
17. Michael Moorer (USA)
18. Sergei Lyakhovich (RUS)
19. Joe Mesi (USA)
20. Larry Donald (USA)
21. Lance Whitaker (USA)
22. Vaughn Bean (USA)
23. Monte Barrett (USA)
24. Brian Nielsen (DEN)
25. Luan Krasniqi (GER)
26. Henry Akinwande (GB)
27. Faruq Saleem (USA)
28. Peter Okhello (UGA)
29. Nikolay Valouev (RUS)
30. Dimitry Bakhov (KAZ)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
2. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
5. Carlos Cruzat (CHI)
6. Louis Azille (DR)
7. Dale Brown (CAN)
8. Sebastiaan Rothmann (SA)
9. Michael Nunn (USA)
10. James Toney (USA)
11. Turan Bagci (TUR)
12. Ramon Garbey (USA)
13. Jason Robinson (USA)
14. Bruce Scott (GB)
15. Virgil Hill (USA)
16. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
17. Rudiger May (GER)
18. Kelvin Davis (USA)
19. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
20. Carl Thompson (GB)
21. Alain Simon (FRA)
22. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
23. Adolpho Washington (USA)
24. Arthur Williams (USA)
25. Roman Kovalchuk (UKR)
26. Wlodarczyk Krysztov (POL)
27. Mohamed Ben Guesmia (ALG)
28. Kenny Keene (USA)
29. Frederic Serrat (FRA)
30. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Clinton Woods (GB)
2. Yawe Davis (ITA)
3. Antonio Tarver (USA)
4. Mads Larsen (DEN)
5. Eric Harding (USA)
6. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
7. Reggie Johnson (USA)
8. Lou Del Valle (USA)
9. Jorge Castro (ARG)
10. Montell Griffin (USA)
11. Derrick Harmon (USA)
12. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)
13. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
14. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
15. David Telesco (USA)
16. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
17. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
18. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
19. Mario Tonus (ITA)
20. Sergio Baez (ARG)
21. Silvio Branco (ITA)
22. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)
23. Demetrius Jenkins (USA)
24. Stipe Drews (CRO)
25. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
26. Michael Rush (USA)
27. Arturo Rivera (MEX)
28. Danny Santiago (PR)
29. Rodney Moore (USA)
30. Alejandro Lakatus (ROM)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Lucas (CAN)
1. Markus Beyer (GER)
2. David Starie (GB)
3. Thomas Tate (USA)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
6. Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)
7. Antwun Echols (USA)
8. Glenn Catley (GB)
9. Dingaan Thobela (SA)
10. Omar Sheika (USA)
11. Jurgen Brahmer (GER)
12. Mehdi Sanoune (FRA)
13. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
14. Dan Batchelder (USA)
15. Henry Porras (CR)
16. Robin Reid (GB)
17. Brian Magee (GB)
18. Mario Veit (GER)
19. David Reid (USA)
20. Scott Pemberton (USA)
21. Anthony Hanshaw (USA)
22. Juan Nelongo (SPA)
23. Nordin Ben Salah (HOL)
24. James Lubwana (UGA)
25. Vinny Paz (USA)
26. Jeff Lacy (USA)
27. Omar Gonzalez (ARG)
28. Rick Thornberry (AUSTRL)
29. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
30. Antoine Robinson (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Erland Betare (FRA)
2. Felix Trinidad (PR)
3. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
4. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
5. Naotaka Hozumi (JAP)
6. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
7. Raymond Joval (HOL)
8. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
9. Robert Allen (USA)
10. Raul Marquez (USA)
11. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
12. Alejandro Berrio (COL)
13. Oure Evans (KEN)
14. Aslan Kodzoed (RUS)
15. Travis Simms (USA)
16. Aaron Davis (USA)
17. Carl Daniels (USA)
18. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
19. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)
20. Andras Galfi (HUN)
21. Lansana Djallo (BEL)
22. Cristian Zanabria (ARG)
23. Hector Velazco (ARG)
24. Anthony Farnell (GB)
25. Delroy Leslie (GB)
26. Stephan Trabant (GER)
27. Satoru Suzuki (JAP)
28. Quentin Smith (USA)
29. Jermain Taylor (USA)
30. Maselino Masoe (NZ)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
1. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
2. Francisco Castillejo (SPA)
3. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
4. Bronco McKart (USA)
5. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
6. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
7. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
8. Steve Roberts (GB)
9. Wayne Alexander (GB)
10. Angel Hernandez (MEX)
11. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
12. Richard Williams (GB)
13. Alex Bunema (USA)
14. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
15. Kassim Ouma (USA)
16. J.C. Candelo (COL)
17. Michael Rask (DEN)
18. Christophe Canclaux (FRA)
19. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
20. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR)
21. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
22. Wilfredo Rivera (PR)
23. Emmett Linton (USA)
24. Adrian Stone (GB)
25. Joshua Onyango (KEN)
26. Gary Jones (USA)
27. Joachin Alcine (CAN)
28. Joya Kawai (JAP)
29. Yuri Tsarenko (RUS)
30. William Gare (SA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vernon Forrest (USA)
1. Shane Mosley (USA)
2. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
3. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
4. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
5. Danny Perez (USA)
6. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
7. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
8. Rafael Pineda (COL)
9. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
10. Michel Trabant (GER)
11. Andrew Lewis (GUY)
12. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
13. Jeffrey Hill (USA)
14. Michele Orlando (ITA)
15. Christian Bladt (DEN)
16. Alexander Vetoux (UKR)
17. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
18. Golden Johnson (USA)
19. James Hare (GB)
20. Julian Holland (AUSTRL)
21. Alessandro Duran (ITA)
22. Hassan Al (DEN)
23. Frederic Klose (FRA)
24. Juan Carlos Rubio (MEX)
25. Neil Sinclair (GB)
26. Charles Whitaker (CAY)
27. Chantel Stanciel (USA)
28. Luther Smith (USA)
29. Miguel Rodriguez (USA)
30. Carlos Quintana (PR)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
2. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Eamonn Magee (GB)
5. Ben Tackie (GHA)
6. James Leija (USA)
7. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
8. Omar Weis (ARG)
9. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
10. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
11. Gabriel Mapuoka (FRA)
12. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
13. Wilfredo Vilches (ARG)
14. Ener Julio (COL)
15. Miguel Cotto (PR)
16. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
17. Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)
18. Vince Phillips (USA)
19. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA)
20. Terronn Millett (USA)
21. Ricardo Williams (USA)
22. Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)
23. Vivian Harris (USA)
24. Junior Witter (GB)
25. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
26. Pablo Sarmiento (ARG)
27. Juan Mosquera (PAN)

28. Ivan Kirpa (RUS)
29. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
30. Ray Oliveira (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
1. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
2. Steve Johnston (USA)
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
5. Carlos Gerena (PR)
6. Raul Balbi (ARG)
7. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
8. Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
9. Colin Dunne (GB)
10. Sandro Casamonica (ITA)
11. Aldo Rios (ARG)
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16. Julio Diaz (USA)
17. Zimele Mpusula (SA)
18. Miguel Callist (PAN)
19. Diego Gimenez (ARG)
20. Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)
21. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
22. Efren Hinojosa (MEX)
23. Omar Bernal (MEX)
24. Michele Delli Paoli (ITA)
25. Gary Balletto (USA)
26. Sayan Sanchat (RUS)
27. Michael Clark (USA)
28. Steve Murray (GB)
29. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
30. Wilmer Gomez (PAN)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
2. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
3. Jesus Chavez (USA)
4. Randy Suico (PHIL)
5. Philip Ndou (SA)
6. Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)
7. Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)
8. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
9. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
10. Affif Djelti (FRA)
11. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
12. Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)
13. Daniel Alicea (PR)
14. Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)
15. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
16. Jorge Paez (MEX)
17. Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)
18. Michael Gomez (GB)
19. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
20. Mzonke Fana (SA)
21. Orlando Salido (MEX)
22. Claudio Martinet (ARG)
23. Javier Alvarez (ARG)
24. Alex Arthur (GB)
25. Silvano Usini (ITA)
26. Lamont Pearson (USA)
27. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
28. Nate Campbell (USA)
29. Daniel Attah (NIG)
30. Hogu Min (KOR)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)
1. Injin Chi (KOR)
2. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
3. Michael Brodie (GB)
4. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
5. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
6. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
7. Naseem Hamed (GB)
8. Anthony Tshehla (SA)
9. Scott Harrison (GB)
10. Guty Espadas (MEX)
11. Manuel Medina (MEX)
12. Luis Fuentes (MEX)
13. Istvan Kovacs (HUN)
14. William Abelyan (USA)
15. Junior Jones (USA)
16. Panther Yanagida (JAP)
17. Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)
18. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
19. Daniel Seda (PR)
20. Yangsoo Sung (KOR)
21. Orlando Soto (PAN)
22. Zahir Raheem (USA)
23. Frankie Toledo (USA)
24. Cristobal Cruz (MEX)
25. Pastor Maurin (ARG)
26. Roger Medal (NIC)
27. Oscar Leon (COL)
28. Augie Sanchez (USA)
29. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
30. Eiichi Sugama (JAP)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Willie Jorrin (USA)
1. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
2. Oscar Larios (MEX)
3. Kiattisak Chocchoi (THAI)
4. Paulie Ayala (USA)
5. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
6. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
7. Youngjin Cho (KOR)
8. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
9. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
10. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
11. Wayne McCullough (IRE)
12. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
13. Bones Adams (USA)
14. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
15. Jorge Eliecer Julio (COL)
16. Fabio Oliva (ARG)
17. Arnel Barotillo (AUSTRL)
18. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
19. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
20. Debind Thapa (NEP)
21. Yober Ortega (VEN)
22. Wethya Singwangcha (THAI)
23. Joan Guzman (DR)
24. Angel Chacon (PR)
25. Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
26. Michael Alldis (GB)
27. Turcay Kaya (FRA)
28. Norihisa Tomimoto (JAP)
29. Jose Luis Valbuena (VEN)
30. Hugo Soto (ARG)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Genaro Garcia (USA)
3. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
4. Jess Maca (PHIL)
5. Diego Morales (MEX)
6. Spend Abazi (DEN)
7. Noel Wilders (GB)
8. Abner Cordero (PHIL)
9. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
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19. Eidy Moya (VEN)
20. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
21. Moises Castro (NIC)
22. Nicky Booth (GB)
23. Pete Frissina (USA)
24. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
25. Frankie DeMilo (SWE)
26. Ryuichi Minoriyama (JAP)
27. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
28. Fasan 3K-Battery (THAI)
29. Hyok Jun Kim (KOR)
30. Eduardo Escobedo (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
2. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
3. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
4. Luis Bolanos (COL)
5. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
6. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
7. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
8. Jose Beranza (MEX)
9. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
10. Sot Sot Veeraphol (THAI)
11. Celes Kobayashi (JAP)
12. Shingo Sasaki (JAP)
13. Erick Lopez (MEX)
14. Eiji Kojima (JAP)
15. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
16. Takuya Kiya (JAP)
17. Luis Perez (NIC)
18. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
19. Alexander Knight (RUS)
20. Jamie Barcelona (PHIL)
21. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
22. Sergio Santillan (ARG)
23. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
24. Julio Coronel (COL)
25. Roberto Bonilla (NIC)
26. Jovy Oracion (PHIL)
27. Shin Ogata (JAP)
28. Trinidad Mendoza (MEX)
29. Tat Torres (MEX)
30. Lunga Ntontela (SA)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
2. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
3. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
4. Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)
5. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
6. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
7. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
8. Hawk Makepula (SA)
9. Gerson Guerrero (MEX)
10. Everardo Morales (MEX)
11. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
12. Omar Narvaez (ARG)
13. Damaen Kelly (GB)
14. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
15. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
16. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
17. Koji Koyama (JAP)
18. Rolly Lunas (PHIL)
19. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
20. Hayato Asai (JAP)
21. Jason Booth (GB)
22. Gabriel Elizondo (USA)
23. Evaristo Primero (MEX)
24. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
25. Peter Culshaw (GB)
26. Yosuke Morishima (JAP)
27. Gilberto Keb-Baas (MEX)
28. Alejandro Moreno (MEX)
29. Gabula Vabaza (SA)
30. Mimoun Chent (FRA)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Yosam Choi (KOR)
1. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
2. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Agustin Luna (MEX)
4. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
5. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
6. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
7. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
8. John Molina (COL)
9. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
10. Rodrigo Garcia (MEX)
11. Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)
12. Victor Burgos (MEX)
13. Pilkoo Kang (KOR)
14. Jun Kitano (JAP)
15. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
16. Vuyisile Bebe (SA)
17. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
18. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
19. Jinho Kim (KOR)
20. Juan Centero (NIC)
21. Flash Villacura (PHIL)
22. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
23. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
24. Minsoo Jang (KOR)
25. Andrea Sarritzu (ITA)
26. Omar Nino (MEX)
27. Keisuke Yokoyama (JAP)
28. Steve Msimango (SA)
29. Deende Kengkarun (THAI)
30. Samransak Singmanassak (THAI)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
1. Khulile Makeba (SA)
2. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
4. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
5. Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)
6. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
7. Noel Arambulet (VEN)
8. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
9. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
10. Juan Palacios (NIC)
11. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
12. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
13. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
14. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
15. Gemki Ohnaka (JAP)
16. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
17. Jairo Arango (PAN)
18. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
19. Hiroyuki Abe (JAP)
20. Omar Soto (MEX)
21. Wele Maqolo (SA)
22. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
23. Eagle Okuda (JAP)
24. Manny Melchor (PHIL)
25. Valentin Leon (MEX)
26. Fernando Luna (MEX)
27. Miguel Barrera (MEX)
28. Daisuke Iida (JAP)
29. Lorenzo Trejo (MEX)
30. Decho Bankluaygym (THAI)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of May 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Chris Byrd (USA)
2. Vacant
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. Evander Holyfield (USA)
6. Jameel McCline (USA)
7. Monte Barrett (USA)
8. Fres Oquendo (USA)
9. Clifford Etienne (USA)
10. Oliver McCall (USA)
11. Tim Witherspoon (USA)
12. Lance Whitaker (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
5. James Toney (USA)
6. Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
7. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
8. Kelvin Davis (USA)
9. Dale Brown (CAN)
10. Jason Robinson (USA)
11. Jorge Castro (ARG)
12. Virgil Hill (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Derrick Harmon (USA)
4. Eric Harding (USA)
5. David Telesco (USA)
6. Reggie Johnson (USA)
7. Yawe Davis (ITA)
8. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
9. Montell Griffin (USA)
10. Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)
11. Silvio Branco (ITA)
12. Glencoffe Johnson (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Thomas Tate (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Antwun Echols (USA)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Mads Larsen (DEN)
6. David Starie (GB)
7. Markus Beyer (GER)
8. Omar Sheika (USA)
9. Sam Hill (USA)
10. Richard Grant (USA)
11. Fernando Zuniga (USA)
12. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Felix Trinidad (PR)
3. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
4. Erland Betare (FRA)
5. Robert Allen (USA)
6. Carl Daniels (USA)
7. Howard Eastman (GB)
8. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
9. Raymond Joval (HOL)
10. Ali Ennebati (FRA)
11. Bert Schenk (GER)
12. Bea Diallo (BEL)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
1. Bronco McKart (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Alex Bunema (USA)
4. Angel Hernandez (USA)
5. Steve Roberts (GB)
6. Kassim Ouma (USA)
7. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
8. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
9. J.C. Candelo (COL)
10. Michael Rask (DEN)
11. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
12. Robert Frazier (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
4. Danny Perez (USA)
5. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
6. Rafael Pineda (COL)
7. Jose Rivera (USA)
8. Cory Spinks (USA)
9. James Hare (ENG)
10. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
11. Antonio Diaz (MEX)
12. Hector Quiroz (MEX)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Ben Tackie (GHA)
2. Vacant
3. Arturo Gatti (USA)
4. Carlos Vilches (ARG)
5. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
6. Omar Weis (ARG)
7. James Leija (USA)
8. Micky Ward (USA)
9. Ray Oliveira (USA)
10. Teddy Reid (JAM)
11. Terronn Millett (USA)
12. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Paul Spadafora (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
5. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
6. Angel Manfredy (USA)
7. Steve Johnston (USA)
8. Julian Wheeler (USA)
9. Leavander Johnson (USA)
10. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)
11. Dennis Holbaek (DEN)
12. Stefano Zoff (ITA)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Steve Forbes (USA)
1. Vacant
2. David Santos (USA)
3. Philip Ndou (SA)
4. Jesus Chavez (USA)
5. Carlos Hernandez (USA)
6. Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)
7. Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)
8. Luis Lizarraga (USA)
9. Daniel Alicea (USA)
10. Orlando Salido (MEX)
11. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
12. Nate Campbell (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Tapia (USA)
1. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
2. Manuel Medina (MEX)
3. Oscar Larios (MEX)
4. Oscar Leon (PR)
5. Frankie Toledo (USA)
6. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
7. Victor Polo (COL)
8. Michael Brodie (ENG)
9. David Toledo (USA)
10. William Abelyan (USA)
11. Naseem Hamed (ENG)
12. Scott Harrison (SCOT)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
4. F. Rakkiatgym (INDO)
5. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
6. Enrique Sanchez (MEX)
7. Fernando Velardez (USA)
8. Paulie Ayala (USA)
9. Jorge Eliecer Julio (COL)
10. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Manou Fukashima (JAP)
12. David Donis (USA)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Tim Austin (USA)
1. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
2. Vacant
3. Pete Frissina (USA)
4. Diego Morales (MEX)
5. Adan Vargas (MEX)
6. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
7. Mark Johnson (USA)
8. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
9. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
10. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
11. Toshiaki Nakajima (JAP)
12. Spend Abazi (DEN)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Felix Machado (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Martin Castillo (MEX)
4. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
5. Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)
6. Ricardo Vargas (USA)
7. Samson 3K-Battery (THAI)
8. Luis Bolano (COL)
9. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
10. Julio Coronel (COL)
11. Adonis Rivas (NIC)
12. Oscar Andrade (MEX)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
4. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
5. David Guerault (FRA)
6. Damaen Kelly (GB)
7. Wandee Chareon (THAI)
8. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
9. Mike Trejo (USA)
10. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
11. Angel Priolo (COL)
12. Jason Booth (GB)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Lopez (MEX)
1. Jose Burgos (MEX)
2. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
3. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
4. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
5. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
6. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
7. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
8. Jorge Arce (MEX)
9. Juan Keb Baas (MEX)
10. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
11. Celso Danggud (PHIL)
12. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roberto Leyva (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Miguel Barrera (MEX)
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
5. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
6. Noel Arambulet (VEN)
7. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
8. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
9. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
10. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
11. Eriberto Gejon (PHIL)
12. Isaac Bustos (MEX)

CLASSIC

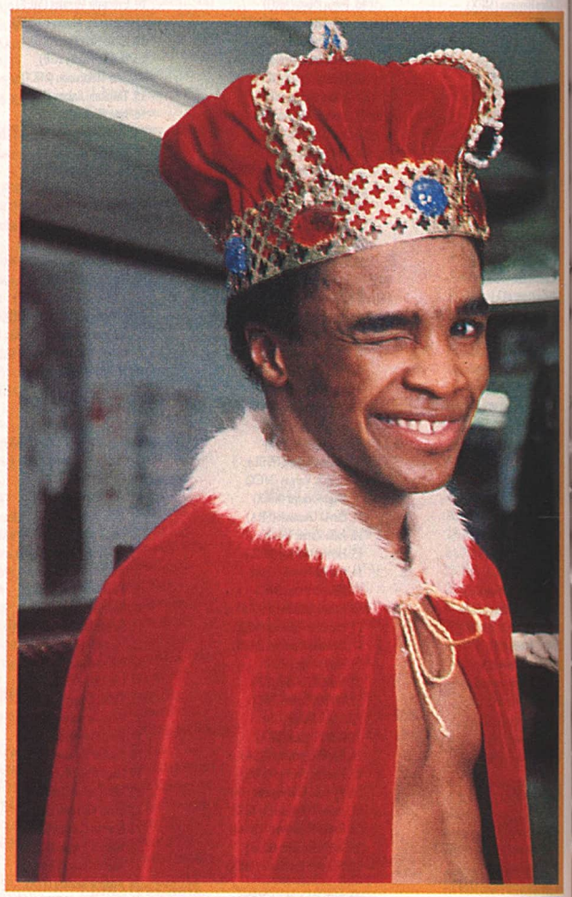
From THE RING, November 1979

SUGAR RAY LEONARD: BOXING'S NEW SUPERSTAR

From Palmer Park To Pugilism's Peak

By George Clifford

(Editor's Note: This is a condensed version.)



In the late-1970s, Sugar Ray Leonard wanted to be more than just the king of Prince Georges County, Maryland. He was on the verge of ruling the boxing world, after capturing Olympic gold in 1976. But unlike some superstar athletes who leave the areas where they build their success, Leonard returned to the place where it all began for him.

There isn't much about Prince Georges County, Maryland, that hints of success. Although it wraps around the eastern half of Washington, D.C., it still has managed to avoid most of the affluence the capital bestows on its neighbors. Prince Georges has been limping for a long time, and things haven't been getting better.

At the end of World War II, most of the county's land was planted in corn and tobacco, and despite the occasional epidemics of blue mold, was considerably more inviting than its current crop—two story apartment buildings, shopping plazas, and a bumper harvest of macadam parking lots—make it. A friend once set out to build a quality community in Prince Georges. He went bankrupt.

It is a place where lower income whites moved in the 1950s to escape the influx of blacks who came to Washington, and where blacks, seeking a better life for their children, moved later. They were all disappointed. It has the blues—blue mold, blue collars, and Monday morning blues that last all week. It is Washington's Newark. It needs a massive infusion of self-confidence.

At last, it seems to have found one.

Locked in an avalanche of 1,000-power smiles and a maelstrom of whirling fists is the county's best known citizen, the darling of the 1976 Olympics, and, quite probably, the next welterweight champion of the world (WBC version), Sugar Ray Leonard. While Washington, Baltimore, and now, Las Vegas, claim him as their own, Leonard not only lives in Prince Georges, he likes it there.

The sonorous voices of television like to remind their captives that Pennsylvania Avenue is the "Avenue Of Presidents." It stretches from the glamour and glitter of Georgetown past the White House and the bastions of the bureaucracy to the Capitol and the restored elegance of The Hill. That's about as far as the sonorous voices are likely to follow it. But it keeps going. Over the Anacostia River, through the city's shame, Anacostia, and on into Prince Georges County.

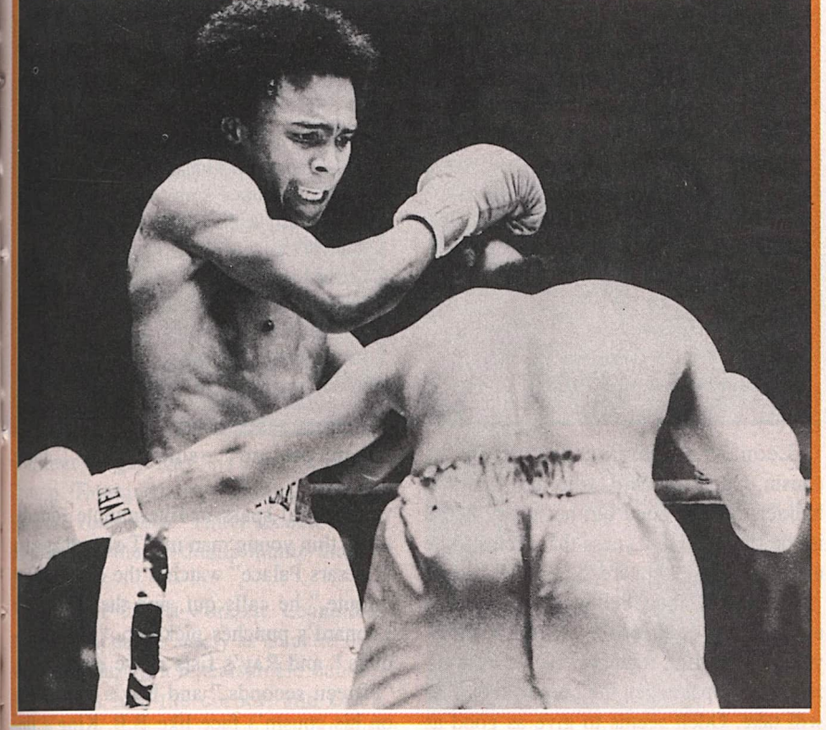
That's the way you go to see Sugar Ray Leonard. You turn at a giant warehouse, follow another road past carry-outs and parking lots, and turn right just past a drive-in theater.

The Oakcrest Community Center doesn't look exciting from the outside. What grass there is needs cutting. The buildings, painted white, look a little tired, and so do most of the cars in the parking lot. Right in front of the door, however, is a cream Mercedes Benz 450 SL, with a black convertible top. It seems out of place.

This is where Leonard worked out as an amateur, where he learned to pound out 150 amateur victories and nine world titles, including the gold medal from Montreal. It is also the place where the now-professional Leonard, who could live and train anywhere on the face of the earth, chooses to pound the bags and pound his sparring partners.

It is an unlikely place for a fighter. Especially a great one. The inside is clean, well-ventilated, and remarkably well-equipped. There are folding chairs around the ring, and the room seems to have the dusted and polished feel of a church hall. You feel that anyone could come there and be at ease.

They do come. Small children, men and women, and mothers carrying infants. They come and sit quietly and wait to see Prince Georges County's greatest asset.



Leonard made an impressive pro debut on February 5, 1977, in Baltimore, winning a one-sided six-round decision over Luis "The Bull" Vega. It marked the first of six fights Leonard would have in '77, three of which were close to home.

Most of the visitors don't recognize Leonard. He is standing outside the ropes with his trainer, Dave Jacobs. Leonard, in light brown shorts, a matching shirt, and sneakers, looks like neither a man who will fight for the championship in December nor someone who has earned $2-million in less than three years.

Inside the ring, two fighters are pummeling each other with a good bit of style and grace, and Jacobs shouts instructions to them. Leonard just watches, his face impassive, almost grim. Finally, he walks toward the locker room.

A boy with a shaved head, no more than four years old, can hardly contain himself.

"Hey, Ray," the boy says, almost rising from his folding chair.

Leonard's face suddenly lights up into the beaming visage that is welcome in so many living rooms as it comes across the TV.

"How're you doing?" Leonard says, and continues toward the locker room.

"He likes me," the little boy says. "Sugar Ray likes me."

Kids can spot phonies in an instant, and they can tell the real thing, too. Nobody had to explain it to the boy with the shaved head and his friends. Leonard is the real thing. He doesn't have to waste his time with little kids; not when he has a championship fight and television appearances and investments and his family to worry about. But he does take the time, even if it is only an instant, and the kids know he cares. And they love him.

In a while, Leonard comes back, in white ring shoes and blue track shorts with white trim.

"Sugar Ray, Sugar Ray, Sugar Ray," the boy with the shaved head chants. "Yeah, yeah, yeah."

This time Leonard is all business, and moves quickly to Jacobs' side, where he and Janks Morton tape Leonard's hands, putting sponges over the knuckles that gave Leonard so much pain in Montreal. When they are finished with the tape,

THE RING RATINGS, November 1979

Danny Lopez

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Larry Holmes,** Easton, PA
2. **Gerrie Coetzee,** South Africa
3. **Earnie Shavers,** Warren, OH
4. **John Tate,** Knoxville, TN
5. **Mike Weaver,** Los Angeles, CA
6. **Leroy Jones,** Denver, CO
7. **Lorenzo Zanon,** Italy
8. **Ken Norton,** San Diego, CA
9. **Alfredo Evangelista,** Spain
10. **Scott LeDoux,** Minneapolis, MN

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Victor Galindez, Argentina
1. **Matthew Saad Muhammad,** Philadelphia, PA
2. **Marvin Johnson,** Indianapolis. IN
3. **Alvaro (Yaqui) Lopez,** Stockton, CA
4. **John Conteh,** England
5. **Mike Rossman,** Turnersville, NJ
6. **James Scott,** Rahway, NJ
7. **Eddie Gregory,** Brooklyn, NY
8. **Lotte Mwale,** Zambia
9. **Mustapha Wassaja,** Denmark
10. **Rudi Koopmans,** Holland

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vito Antuofermo, Italy
1. **Marvin Hagler,** Brockton, MA
2. **Hugo Corro,** Argentina
3. **Alan Minter,** England
4. **Ronnie Harris,** Akron, OH
5. **Mike Colbert,** Portland, OR
6. **Toby Sibson,** England
7. **Mustafa Hamsho,** Syria
8. **Marcos Geraldo,** Mexico
9. **George Steinherr,** Germany
10. **David Love,** San Diego, CA

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Masashi Kudo, Japan
1. **Ayub Kalule,** Uganda
2. **Maurice Hope,** England
3. **Rocky Mosley Jr.,** Las Vegas, NV
4. **Frank Wissenbach,** Germany
5. **Rocky Mattolli,** Australia
6. **Tony Chiaverini,** Kansas City, MO
7. **Sandy Torres,** Puerto Rico
8. **Marijan Benes,** Yugoslavia
9. **Gert Steyn,** South Africa
10. **Andoni Amana,** Spain

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Wilfred Benitez, Puerto Rico
1. **Jose (Pipino) Cuevas,** Mexico
2. **Ray Leonard,** Palmer Park, MD
3. **Roberto Duran,** Panama
4. **Thomas Hearns,** Detroit, MI
5. **Pete Ranzany,** Sacramento, CA
6. **Jorgen Hansen,** Denmark
7. **Angel Espada,** Puerto Rico
8. **Andy Price,** Los Angeles, CA
9. **David Green,** England
10. **Manuel Jimenez,** Puerto Rico

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Antonio Cervantes, Colombia
1. **Joe Kimpuani,** Zaire
2. **Sang-Hyung Kim,** South Korea
3. **Saoul Mamby,** New York, NY
4. **Miguel Montilla,** Dominican Republic
5. **Esteban De Jesus,** Puerto Rico
6. **Lennox Blackmore,** Guyana
7. **Teo Ozuna,** Dominican Republic
8. **Sean O'Grady,** Oklahoma City, OK
9. **Bruce Curry,** Los Angeles, CA
10. **Sammy Ayala,** San Antonio, TX

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Ernesto Espana,** Venezuela
2. **Jim Watt,** Scotland
3. **Claude Noel,** Trinidad
4. **Julio Valdez,** Dominican Republic
5. **Johnny Lira,** Chicago, IL
6. **Howard Davis,** Glen Cove, NY
7. **Jorge Morales,** Puerto Rico
8. **Vilomar Fernandez,** Dominican Republic
9. **Aaron Pryor,** Cincinnati, OH
10. **Hilmer Kenty,** Detroit, MI

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Samuel Serrano, Puerto Rico
1. **Alexis Arguello,** Nicaragua
2. **Frankie Baltazar,** Los Angeles, CA
3. **Bobby Chacon,** Los Angeles, CA
4. **Rafael (Bazooka) Limon,** Mexico
5. **Rodolfo Sanchez,** Spain
6. **Victor Echegaray,** Argentina
7. **Greg Coverson,** Columbus, OH
8. **Roberto Elizondo,** Corpus Christi, TX
9. **Arturo Leon,** Tucson, AZ
10. **Carlos Hernandez,** Spain

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Danny Lopez, Los Angeles, CA
1. **Eusebio Pedroza,** Panama
2. **Ruben Castillo,** Bakersfield, CA
3. **Roberto Castanon,** Spain
4. **Cecilio Lastra,** Spain
5. **Mike Ayala,** San Antonio, TX
6. **Juan Malvarez,** Argentina
7. **Eddie Ndukwu,** Nigeria
8. **Hector Carrasquilla,** Panama

Leonard looks like he is wearing white boxing gloves. Then they squeeze leather gloves over the enormous bandages, and gently fit a white headgear over his ears.

Morton, a longtime friend of Leonard who would have to trim down to box as a heavyweight, rubs oil on Sugar Ray's body like a priest anointing a saint. Under the lights, Leonard's body glistens with the oil, and his muscles stand out in sharp definition. He loosens up those muscles, and is ready.

Leonard's sparring partner is his cousin, Odell Leonard, who has a darker, bulkier torso, a good but not great record in the ring, and a shyness that seems to be exaggerated by Leonard's gregariousness.

Sugar Ray and Odell work well together, probing each other although, after years of sparring together, each can accurately anticipate even the breaths the other will take. Odell seems to give as good as he takes.

"Keep that head moving," Jacobs yells. "There you are ... side-to-side ... there you are."

Leonard spars in five-minute rounds, and a thin young man in a T-shirt that says "Caesars Palace" watches the clock. "One minute," he calls out, and the rhythm of Leonard's punches picks up. "Thirty seconds," and Ray's fists move even faster. "Fifteen seconds," and Ray's fists move on his cousin's face like B.B. King's fingers on a guitar string. "Time."

It's that way through every round. You

9. Salvador **Sanchez,** Mexico
10. Abdul **Bey,** Honolulu, HI

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: **Wilfredo Gomez,** Puerto Rico
1. Ricardo **Cardona,** Colombia
2. Nicky **Perez,** Tucson, AZ
3. Jose **Caba,** Dominican Republic
4. Juan (Kid) **Meza,** Los Angeles, CA
5. Soon Yun **Chung,** South Korea
6. Sergio **Palma,** Argentina
7. Javier **Flores,** Salt Lake City, UT
8. Leo **Cruz,** Dominican Republic
9. Shuchi **Isogami,** Japan
10. Baba **Jiminez,** Colombia

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: **Jorge Lujan,** Panama
1. Lupe **Pintor,** Mexico
2. Carlos **Zarate,** Mexico
3. Alberto **Davila,** Los Angeles, CA
4. Juan F. **Rodriguez,** Spain
5. Roberto **Rubaldino,** Mexico
6. Oscar **Muniz,** Los Angeles, CA
7. Ricardo **Bennett,** Panama
8. Julian **Solis,** Puerto Rico
9. Andres **Hernandez,** Puerto Rico
10. Juan **Alvarez,** Mexico

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: **Chan-Hee Park,** South Korea
1. Yoko **Gushiken,** Japan
2. Betulio **Gonzalez,** Venezuela
3. Miguel **Canto,** Mexico
4. Guty **Espadas,** Mexico
5. Sung-Jun **Kim,** South Korea
6. Charlie **Magri,** England
7. Joey **Olivo,** Los Angeles, CA
8. Shoji **Oguma,** Japan
9. Netrnoi **Vorasingh,** Thailand
10. Rey **Melendez,** Dominican Republic

can hear Sugar Ray's fists. "Thump. Thump. Thump, thump, thump, thump." Then the voice yells "Thirty seconds," and the fists go "thump-thump-thump-thump-thump."

It is more than a workout. Leonard is trying out tactics as surely as an actor tries out moves during a rehearsal. He deliberately backs into the corner, and Odell comes after him, swinging. Sugar Ray blasts his way out, and Odell is left shaking his head to stop the ringing.

One of Leonard's endearing qualities was his ability to relate with his fans, especially kids. Leonard always took the time for young fans, even while training for a championship fight.

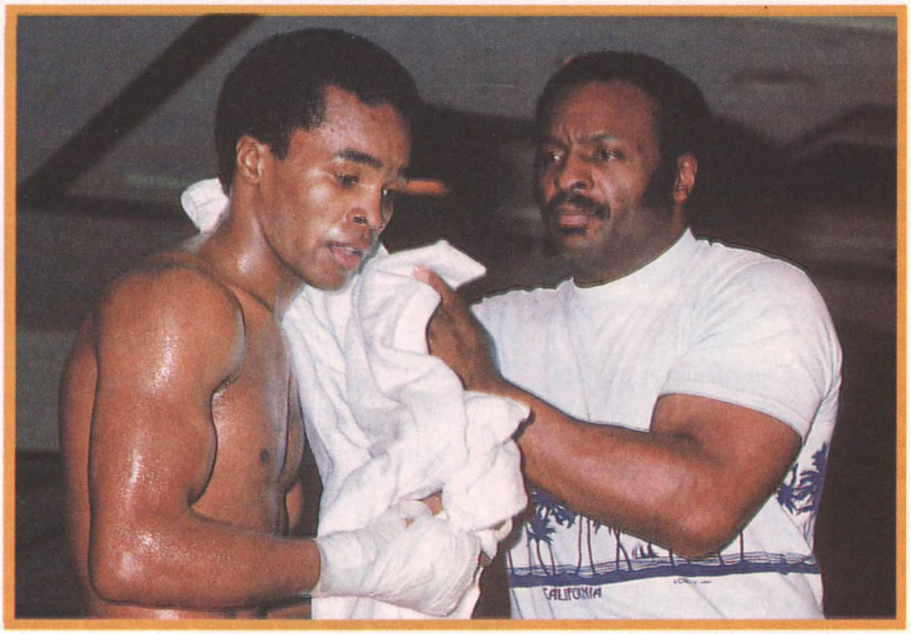
(In his victory over Pete Ranzany in Las Vegas in mid-August, Sugar Ray tried it again. He backed into the corner and cocked his right hand. Ranzany wisely backed off.)

The boy with the shaved head and the others at the Oakcrest gym got a better show than most spectators do at Sugar Ray's fights. There is more action, and it goes on longer.

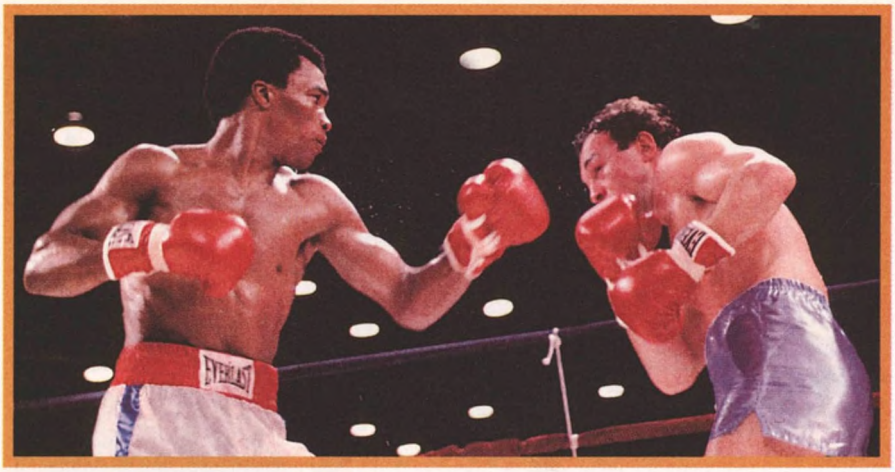
"Time," the thin man says at the end of the workout.

"Beautiful," says Jacobs.

The entourage closes in around Sugar Ray, and walks with him to a corner of the room, where hands with towels gently wipe off the oil and the sweat, and Jacobs' loving fingers offer a massage. The audience is quiet as Leonard goes back to the locker room for his shower.



Janks Morton is one of many long-time associates Leonard kept by his side during his ride up the welterweight ladder. Morton and Leonard's trainer, Dave Jacobs, took meticulous care of Leonard's hands, which caused him great pain at the Olympics in Montreal.



Leonard proved his durability in this eight-round stoppage of Fernand Marcotte in February 1979. It was the third-straight early victory for Leonard, who ran his record to 19-0 (12) at the time.

He looks fit and confident as he goes across the room. Odell Leonard doesn't fare so well. His eyes are puffed and squinting, like Kid Gavilan's were at the end of his career. And Odell has just started.

Boxing, as Ray Leonard well knows, is a dangerous business. He has said frequently, even after one-sided triumphs, "One punch can end a career." He makes plans against the end of his career.

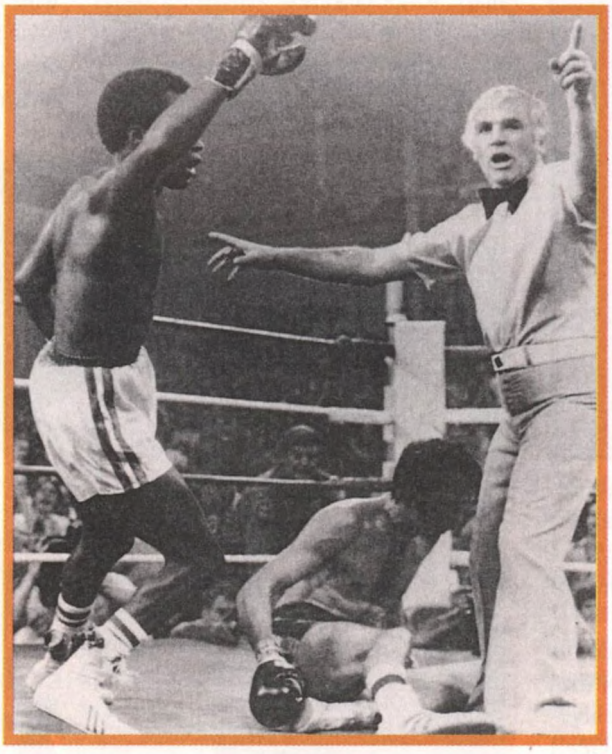
Most of his unbelievable earnings have been invested wisely. He bought his parents a split-level brick home. His lawyer has set up a retirement plan, funded with government bonds and bank certificates of deposit. There are other investments he hopes will grow.

Most important, he owns all the shares in Sugar Ray Leonard Inc., a business, that, like Prince Georges County, has one great asset—Sugar Ray Leonard. Jacobs, Morton, and even Angelo Dundee, his manager of record, are all employees. All but Dundee are on the payroll. He, like the good salesman he is, gets 15 percent.

Leonard and Dundee seldom see each other except in the days immediately preceding a fight and, of course, during the bout. Dundee makes the matches, in the beginning bringing Leonard along slowly, then, fight-by-fight, increasing the skills of his opponents. It is a process like going to school. Leonard had to get through the elementary classes before he could go to high school. Now he is ready for the university of pugilism—a championship fight. Some of the courses along the way, after all, were tough ones.

By most measures, Pete Ranzany was one of the tough ones. In the first round of that bout, Ranzany landed most of the punches, but it was Leonard who walked back to his corner at the bell with a smile. He had studied the man, and he knew he could beat him. It took Leonard most of four rounds.

Throughout his success in the ring, and the phenomenal economic success and publicity that have accompanied it, Leonard has managed to keep his perspective. Through it all, he is still the kid from Prince Georges County.



Leonard's victory over Pete Ranzany was among his hardest fights. In the first round, Ranzany landed most of the punches, yet it was Leonard who returned to his corner smiling. Sugar Ray stopped former title challenger Ranzany in the fourth.

At the time of the first Floyd Patterson-Sonny Liston fight in Chicago, in September 1962, most of the talking was done by a young heavyweight named Cassius Clay. He scoffed at the champion and the contender, and when the name of either was mentioned, he trumpeted, "If I can't beat him, I'll quit. I am the greatest."

It is probable that Muhammad Ali was the greatest, both in the ring and as a promoter. He deserves what he made, but his promotional spiels were more interesting when he looked at his audience, rather than looking over their heads, as he seemed to be doing in later years.

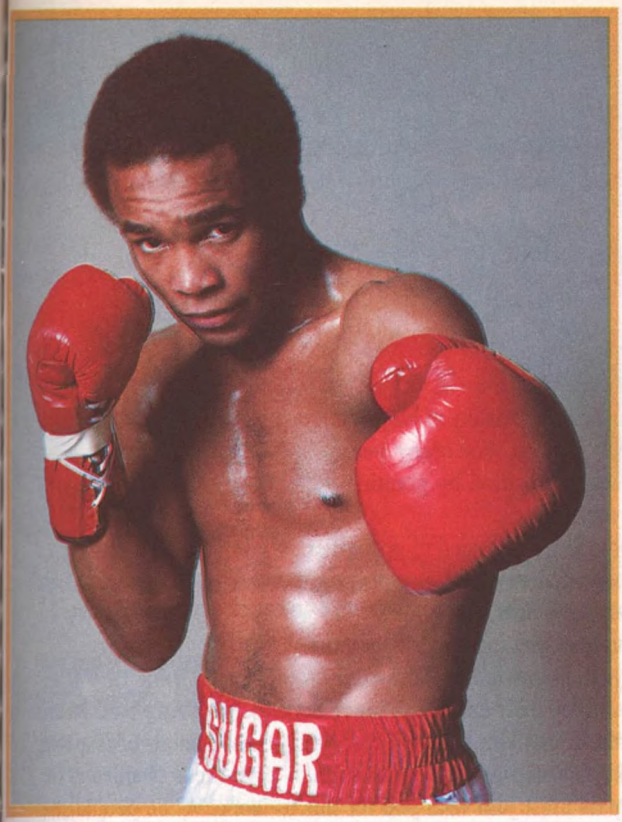
It is pleasant that Ali's successor as boxing's biggest drawing card is a nice young man who brings the people in with a big smile and soft words. And he still looks people straight in the eye.

Perhaps he is just lucky. Or perhaps America is ready for the return of the decent, pleasant, clean-cut hero, the All-American boy. Whatever, Leonard and Wilfred Benitez, the WBC welterweight champion, will gross over $1-million each for their bout in December. It seems safe to presume that most of that money is not coming on the basis of Benitez' strength as a drawing card.

Leonard came out of the dressing room and was surrounded by his admirers. He grinned his 1,000-power grin, and posed with each of the small boys who stood around him, while a man with an Instamatic popped flash cubes. When it was the boy with the shaved head's turn—he was the smallest and the last—Leonard told the man with the camera to wait until the boy had his hand clenched in a fist, and Leonard held the boy in his arms for the picture.

The man with the camera wanted to be in a picture, too, and found someone to hold the camera while he posed.

"Take your time," Leonard



Ray Leonard was becoming the biggest boxing draw since Muhummad Ali. All that was missing was a title belt, which Leonard was aiming toward with plans to fight WBC welterweight titlist Wilfred Benitez in November '79.

said, reassuringly, and his smile in the picture was as wide as it had been with the kids.

A visitor suggested that all of this must be tiring for Leonard, particularly after a workout on a hot, humid day.

"I enjoy it," he said, his smile lighting up his face. "Particularly the time with the kids. I always have time for that. I want them to be able to look up to me. I'm glad they can look up to me. I want to be an example. I'd like to work with kids when I stop boxing. Maybe counseling, that would be good."

His smile is as radiant as the Fourth of July, and you have to wonder if he is really happy or if he is just putting it on.

"I want to be happy," he said. "Now, I'm happy for what I can do for my mother and father, and I'm happy that I'm getting someplace. When I fight for the championship, I'll be one of the first little guys to box for more than $1-million. They say only heavyweights can do that."

And that Mercedes outside. Does that make him happy?

"Do you like it?" he asks. "I've only had it six months. I bought an El Dorado, and I had it for about a month, but I got tired of it. Then I got the Mercedes. Did you see the spoke wheels? I told the dealer I wanted spoke wheels and he said he had never seen a Mercedes with spoke wheels. I said to him, 'That's the reason I want them.'

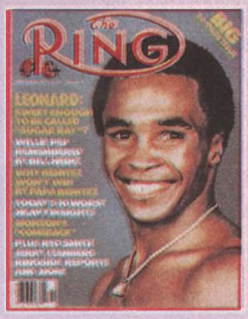
"But happy ... I guess I won't be really happy until I stop boxing. I hope I'll have money in the bank and a bunch of apartment houses. Then I'll be able to help people without hurting myself. And the most important thing, I can just be Ray Leonard."

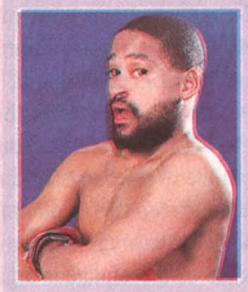
No "Sugar"?

"I'll put the sugar in the jar." ■

THE RING, November 1979

***The Cover*:** Sugar Ray Leonard was on the cusp of fulfilling the dream many envisioned for him when he won a gold medal at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal. Leonard could have lived and trained anywhere, yet he came back home to Maryland to build his legacy.



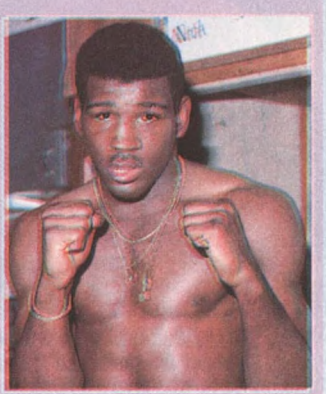


***Father Knows Best?*:** Gregory Benitez had about enough with his son, WBC welterweight titlist Wilfred (pictured). Gregory blasted his son for losing his focus, and refused to be in his son's corner when it came time for Wilfred to defend his title against Sugar Ray Leonard. "Wilfred is a boy who just refuses to listen," Gregory said.

***Full Of Pep*:** One great, Bill Heinz, wrote about another, Willie Pep, in this reflective excerpt from Heinz' book, *They Heard The Cheers*. Heinz wrote that Pep "turned boxing contests into ballets, performances by a virtuoso in which the opponent, trying to punch him out, became an unwilling partner in a dance."

***El Macho Monzon*:** Former middleweight champion Carlos Monzon thought seriously about returning to the ring, two years after announcing his retirement in August 1977. The Argentinian Hall of Famer never did come back, though, and he was serving an 11-year prison sentence for murder when he was killed in a car accident in '95 while on a furlough.

***Fighter Of The Month*:** Bleeding from a nasty cut late in the fifth round and frustrated by John Conteh's jab, Matthew Saad Muhammad came from behind to score a unanimous 15-round decision and retain the WBC light heavyweight title. Woefully behind on the scorecards, a pair of knockdowns in the 14th round helped Saad Muhammad considerably.



COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034: Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

VARYING VIEWS ON THE POLICY

Congratulations on your long overdue decision to stop recognizing the alphabet organizations' "world champions" in your monthly ratings. For many years, THE RING has railed against these phonies but has always compromised its position by granting them a large degree of respectability by listing all their "champions" in your ratings.

Now that you have taken this bold step, you need to go farther. While you have removed all reference to them on your rankings pages, you persist in reporting the results of their title fights and you continue to refer to them in your news articles.

You must stop this. You must pretend that they no longer exist.

While conventional wisdom says that you can't ignore your problems and think they'll go away, in the case of the alphabet organizations, their entire existence depends on being paid attention to. As long as THE RING continues to report on them, they will continue to have an air of respectability.

Of course, having THE RING take this step will not be enough to kayo these characters for good. Other fight magazines and newspapers must join with you for this to work. When people stop hearing about them, the world will forget about them. And once forgotten, they will wither and die.

BOB CHAMPLIN
Newmarket, Ontario

Regarding your new policy in your April 2002 edition, it is a very bad idea and, of course, it's no surprise that Max Kellerman of ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* supports this. Max, THE RING, *KO* magazine, and HBO are very biased toward Mexican-American and Hispanic fighters, and only accept controversy when a U.S. boxer is not given what they think is a right decision. As far as your new policy, only your magazine, ESPN, and HBO agree to it. Please remember Showtime has not publicly accepted your philosophy; neither have Univision or Telemundo, where millions of Mexican-Americans and Hispanics get their boxing news.

On April 20, your friend Floyd Mayweather lost to Mexican champion Jose Luis Castillo. Tell me something: Is this magazine going to give us the same b.s. that it gave all the readers for the draw between Julio Cesar Chavez and Pernell Whitaker? The reason I say this is because the Castillo victory was more obvious than the so-called Whitaker victory.

MARIO GUTIERREZ
San Jose, CA

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Reader Mario Gutierrez claims that THE RING's new championship policy is a bad idea because it could be biased toward American fighters such as Floyd Mayweather, who recently won the lightweight title with a controversial decision over Jose Luis Castillo.

[Editor's note: Yes, despite disagreeing with the official decision, THE RING recognizes Floyd Mayweather as lightweight champion. However, Mr. Gutierrez' charge that THE RING is biased against Latino boxers is ludicrous, as evidenced by this issue's article, "After Two More Controversial Decisions, Boxing Fans Are Asking ... What's The Score?" (page 30), which criticizes a pair of decisions that went against Mexican boxers.]

PAY-PER-VIEW PRESSERS?

After all the prefight fighting for Marco Antonio Barrera-Erik Morales and Oscar De La Hoya-Fernando Vargas, can it be too long before we have PPV press conferences? Hopefully, these fights will be as exciting as the warmups. Incidentally, De La Hoya beats Vargas every day of the week.

JOHN JAMIESON
East Kilbride, Scotland

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

What more does Roy Jones have to do to be considered the best pound-for-pound fighter today, asks Jody Banman. Jones has beaten most of the best 175-pounders around, including highly rated Eric Harding (pictured).

BEING UNREASONABLE ABOUT ROY

I find your refusal to recognize Roy Jones as the best fighter, pound-for-pound, to be unreasonable. In addition to being the most skilled and talented fighter currently in boxing, he is also one of the most accomplished. He is the undisputed world light heavyweight champion and has defended against the best available contenders. Jones has beaten six of the 10 light heavyweights ranked by your publication, as well as four fighters ranked in other divisions, including two current titleholders (Bernard Hopkins and Eric Lucas).

Your contention that Roy Jones does not fight adequate opposition is not correct. Many of his recent opponents were undefeated prior to facing him, and most continue to be rated by you. You malign Roy Jones for not fighting Hopkins or Dariusz Michalczewski, but the reality is that both Hopkins and Michalczewski have demonstrated that they are not really very interested in taking on Roy Jones.

I think that the real reason Roy doesn't get the recognition he deserves is because he is stubborn, egotistical, and easy to dislike. But regardless of that, he is still the best fighter in the world until someone proves otherwise, and should be recognized as such.

JODY BANMAN
Vancouver, British Columbia

RAKING THE RANKINGS

How can THE RING rank Clinton Woods in their own ratings and call David Starie the most overrated fighter in the super middleweight division ("State Of The Game," July 2002)? I realize Woods moved up a few pounds, but didn't he get his butt kicked by Starie a while back? They were fighting for the British Commonwealth title in what I feel was Woods' only fight with a top caliber opponent. He lost! The really sad part about this system is Woods will probably get an unearned shot at Roy Jones, and Starie hasn't even cracked THE RING's top 10 rankings.

SARAH P. FLAHERTY
Boston, MA

FINK FLOYD

I am so irritated with boxing! Having just watched the Jose Luis Castillo-Floyd Mayweather fight, I am appalled by the judges' decision, which favored Mayweather by 116-111 and 115-111 (twice). I'm not shocked, though. This crap goes on all the time. After Mayweather ran for his life all night, was a defensive fighter going backward (quite boring compared to Castillo's style), and threw and landed fewer punches, somehow the three idiot judges, Anek Hongtongkam, Jerry Roth, and John Keane, all gave the win to Mayweather by a landslide! What a joke! Ray Charles could've done a better job.

This situation reeks of a money-making scandal (rematch on pay-per-view), just like Barrera-Morales I, although that was a great fight. This one was a stinker. But there was puddin' head pitchman George Foreman doing his part to sell a rematch. I'm a fan of Mayweather's, but even he bugged me in the end when he said he "beat Castillo easily." Hey, Floyd, it was a fight, not a track meet. He then went on the say he beat Castillo not only convincingly, but with a hurt shoulder. (But he doesn't make excuses). I, for one, will not be watching the big pay-per-view rematch. I hope everyone else will do likewise.

NICOLE CHIE
Ypsilanti, MI

HEAVYWEIGHTS LIVE!

The word on the street is that the heavyweight division is lackluster. I couldn't possibly disagree more. This isn't an Ali-Norton-Foreman-Frazier-Shavers-esque era, but the intrigue and suspense is mounting left and right. You've got the Lewis-Tyson fight scheduled, and even though both fighters are on shaky legs, the possibilities are endless with this matchup. Then there's Chris Byrd, the world's most hated heavyweight. This man is pound-for-pound one of the best boxers in the world, fighting guys with five times more power than him, and they call that unentertaining! And of course, Jameel McCline has come from nowhere to add to the mix. Wladimir Klitschko, Kirk Johnson, David Tua, Hasim Rahman ... get the picture? We have plenty to savor, folks. Stop making comparisons and enjoy the competition!

JUSTIN PHILLIPS
Kennesaw, GA ■

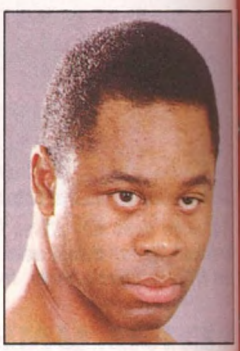
PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Today's heavyweight division may not be bursting with legends like Muhammad Ali, George Foreman, and Joe Frazier. But the class is still stocked with talented fighters like Wladimir Klitschko (pictured), Kirk Johnson, and Hasim Rahman, points out reader Justin Phillips.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

KIRK GETS A CRACK



Johnson: Expects to silence "The Quiet Man"

The WBA heavyweight title doesn't mean what it once did. Ever since **Lennox Lewis** was stripped more than two years ago and the belt fell into the lesser hands of **Evander Holyfield** and then **John Ruiz**, the WBA belt has borne little resemblance to anyone's idea of the real world heavyweight title. In fact, the WBA belt has become almost completely meaningless to everyone but the fighters vying for it.

But that doesn't mean Ruiz' July 27 defense of the title at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas against **Kirk Johnson** is meaningless. These are two legitimate top-10 heavyweight contenders, with the winner becoming a deserving challenger to the winner of Lewis vs. **Mike Tyson**.

"You think I'm not going to feel like world champ after I beat Ruiz? I will," said the 30-year-old Johnson, the only undefeated fighter among THE RING's top 10, as he prepared to head to Dallas, Texas, for a 7½-week training camp. "But I still will want to fight Lewis or Tyson or Holyfield. You almost have to fight those guys to have a touch of greatness. If I beat the winner of Lewis-Tyson, instantly I'm great. If I don't fight those guys, I'd have to make 10 or 12 defenses before they start to say I'm great. People can say what they want about me beating Ruiz, but once I win this fight and I beat the winner between Lewis and Tyson, then what are they gonna say?"

It may sound from those comments like the normally humble Johnson is looking past Ruiz (heck, it sounds like he's looking past Lewis and Tyson, too). But he knows Ruiz, who battled roughly even-up over 36 draining rounds with Holyfield, is no easy mark.

"Ruiz has something you can't teach," Johnson said. "You can't teach someone how to be awkward. He is very underrated, very awkward, and very determined. And he hits pretty good, too. I know people are making me the favorite, probably because they're looking at my speed vs. his speed or my perceived power vs. his perceived power. But honestly, I think he hits just as hard or even harder than me. I'm training my butt off for this fight, and you will see the best Kirk Johnson you've ever seen."

The bout will be broadcast by HBO, and the co-feature will involve bantamweight titleholder **Tim Austin**. **Byron Mitchell**, one of the super middleweight title claimants, will fight on the untelevised undercard. Neither man's challenger had been finalized as of press time.

LISTEN UP

Regardless of whether or not **Oscar De La Hoya** is retired from boxing by this time next year, as he has suggested he might be, he will still remain an important figure in the sport and on the network he has represented throughout his career, HBO. It was announced recently that HBO-Latino, the Spanish-language version of HBO, will be launching a monthly, Thursday-night boxing series in 2003 featuring up-and-coming Hispanic fighters, and De La Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions, with Hall of Fame promoter **Don Chargin** as the matchmaker, will put the fights together. According to HBO Sports President **Ross Greenburg**, the budget will be quite modest, at least by HBO's standards … There's talk of **Felix Trinidad's** second comeback fight being a possible fall pay-per-view against **Tony Ayala**. Considering this column space four months ago was used to rail against the choice of **Hassine Cherifi** as "Tito's" first comeback victim, you can imagine how we feel about this even more one-sided mismatch … Two of the best South African fighters of recent years, former titlists **Vuyani Bungu** and **Lehlo Ledwaba**, are set to square off in their homeland on July 27. Both are coming off knockout losses and lengthy layoffs, however. Ledwaba's last fight was in June '01, while Bungu hasn't fought since March '00 … There are two 115-pound title fights scheduled for the same card in Osaka, Japan, on July 31, featuring probably the two best fighters in the division. WBC beltholder **Masamori Tokuyama** will defend against Mexican journeyman **Erick Lopez**, while WBA titlist **Alexander Munoz** puts his perfect 22-0 (22) record on the line against inexperienced **Eiji Kojima**. ■

De La Hoya: Business is picking up

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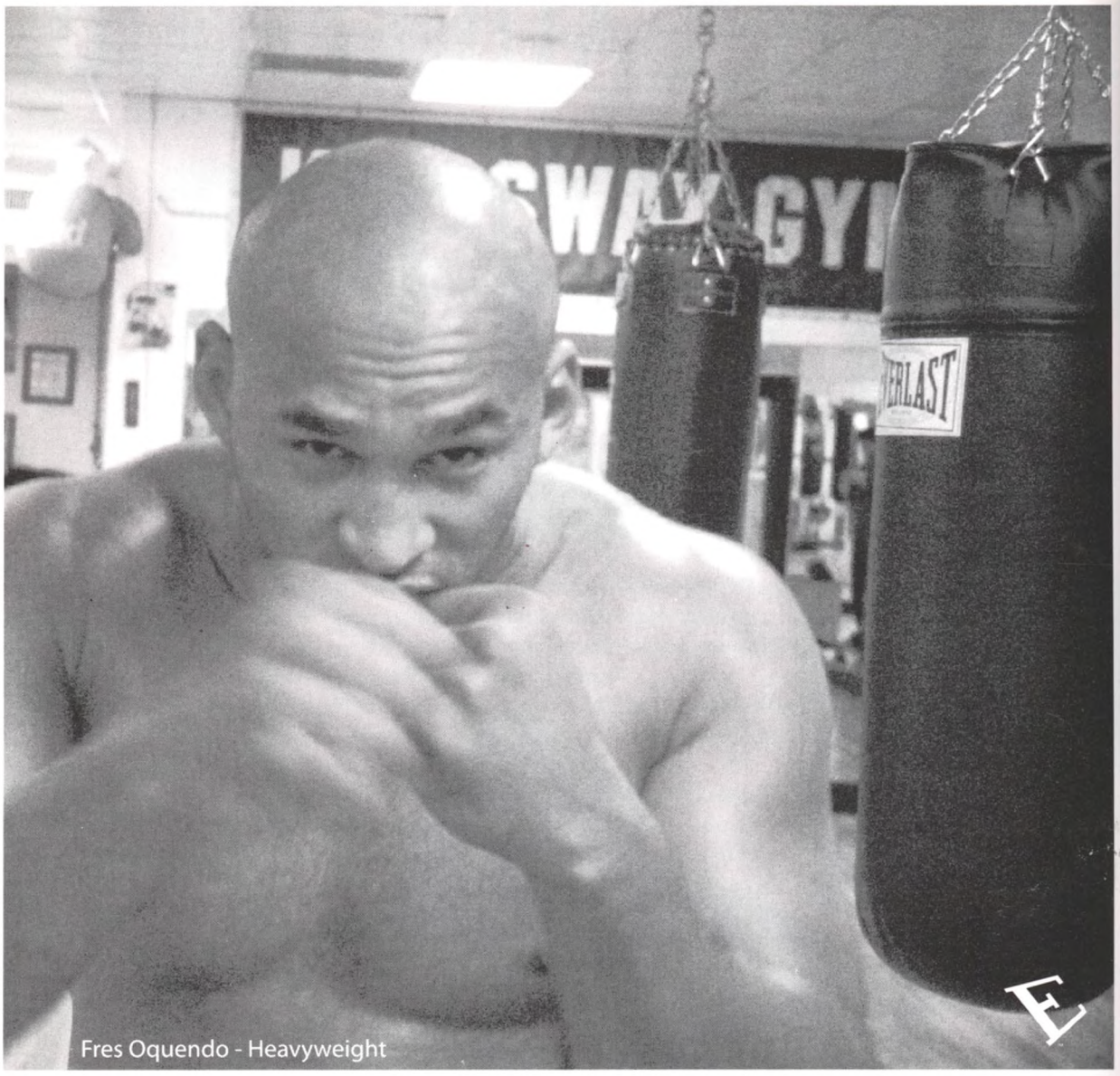

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